This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

UC-NRLF
$B 161 023

GIFT OF
Earl M. Wilbur

Edward P. Bond
April 1849

GIFT OF
Earl M. Wilbur

Edward P. Pond
April 1849

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL WORKS.

ARNOLD, Dr., Early History of Rome. 2 vols. 8vo..... 5 00
ARNOLD, Dr., History of the Later Roman Commonwealth. 8vo..... 2 50
ARNOLD, Dr., Lectures on Modern History, edited by Prof. Reed. 12mo..... 1 25
ARNOLD, Dr., Life and Correspondence, by the Rev. A. P. Stanley. 2d ed. 8vo..... 2 00
AURNTT'S History of the Northwestern Territory. 8vo,..... 2 50
BOLTT'S History of Puritanism. 12mo..... 1 00
CARLYLE'S Life of Schiller. A new ed. 12mo..... 75
EVELYN'S Life of Mrs. Godolphin, edited by B'p of Oxford. 12mo..... 50
FROST, Prof., History of the United States Navy. Plates, 12mo, 1 00
FROST, Prof., History of the United States Army. Plates, 12mo, 1 25
FROST, Prof., History of the Indians of North America. Plates, 12mo..... 1 00
FROST, Prof., History of the Colonies of America. 12mo. Illustrated..... 1 00
FROST, Prof., Life of General Zachary Taylor. 12mo. Illustrated..... 1 25
GUIZOT'S History of Civilization in Europe, edited by Prof. Henry. 12mo..... 1 00
GUIZOT'S Complete History of Civilization, translated by Hazlett. 4 vols..... 3 50
GUIZOT'S History of the English Revolution, 1640. 1 vol..... 1 25
GAYARRE'S Romance of the History of Louisiana. 12mo.... 1 00
HULL, Gen., Military and Civil Life. 8vo..... 2 00
KING, Col., History of the Argentine Republic 12mo..... 75
KOHLRAUSCH'S Complete History of Germany. 8vo..... 1 50
MICHELET'S History of France from the Earliest Period. 2 vols 5 50
MICHELET'S History of the Roman Republic..... 00
MICHELET'S History of the People..... 63
MICHELET'S Life of Martin Luther..... 75
NAPOLEON, Life of, from the French of Laurent De L'Ardeche. 2 vols. 8 vo. 500 cuts..... 4 00
O'CALLAGHAN'S Early History of New-York. 2 vols..... 5 00
ROWAN'S History of the French Revolution. 18mo. 2 vols. in 1 63
SOUTHEY'S Life of Oliver Cromwell. 18mo..... 38
STEVENS' History of Georgia. vol. 1..... 2 00
TAYLOR'S Natural History of Society in the Barbarous and Civilized State. 2 vols. 12mo.... 2 25
TAYLOR'S Manual of Ancient and Modern History. Edited by Prof. Henry. 8vo..... 2 50
TAYLOR'S Ancient History—Separate..... 1 50
TAYLOR'S Modern History—Separate..... 1 50
Used as a Text-book in several Colleges.
TWISS' History of the Oregon Territory. 12mo..... 75
SPRAGUE'S History of the Florida War. Illustrated..... 2 50

LAW BOOKS.

HOLCOMBE'S Digest of the Decisions of the Supreme Court of the U. S., from its Commencement to the present time. Large octavo, law sheep..... 6 00
HOLCOMBE'S Supreme Court Leading Cases on Commercial Law. 8vo. Law Sheep..... 4 00
SMITH'S Compendium of Mercantile Law. With large American additions, by Holcombe and Gholson. 8vo. law sheep..... 4 00
These volumes are highly commended by Justices Taney and Woodbury, Daniel Webster, Rufus Choate, Chancellor Kent, &c.
WARREN'S Popular and Practical Introduction to Law Studies. With American additions, by Thos. W. Clerke. 8vo. law sheep 3 50

RELIGIOUS WORKS.

ARNOLD'S Rugby School Sermons. 50
ANTHON'S Catechism on the Homilies..... 06
ANTHON'S Easy Catechism for Young Children..... 06
A KEMPIS, Of the Imitation of Christ..... 75
BURNET'S History of the Reformation. Edited by Dr. Nares. 23 portraits. 4 vols.....6 00
Do. Cheap edition, 3 vols.....2 50
BURNET on the Thirty-nine Articles. Best edit.....2 00
BIBLE Expositor, The. Illustrated 75
BEAVEN'S Help to Catechising. Edited by Dr. Anthon..... 06
BRADLEY'S Sermons at Clapham and Glasbury.....1 25
BRADLEY'S Practical Sermons..1 50
BRADLEY'S Family and Parish Sermons, comprising the above. 2 vols. in one.....2 50
CRUDEN'S Concordance to the New Testament..... 50
COTTER. The Romish Mass and Rubrics. Translated..... 38
COIT, Dr. Puritanism Reviewed..1 00
CHURTON'S History of the Early English Church..... 75
EVANS' Rectory of Valehead.... 50
FOSTER'S Essays on Christian Morals..... 50
GRESLEY'S Portrait of an English Churchman..... 50
GRESLEY'S Treatise on Preaching 1 25
HOOK. The Cross of Christ; Meditations on our Saviour..... 50
HOOKER'S Complete Works. Edited by Keble. 2 vols.....4 50
IVES, Bishop. Sermons. 16mo.. 50
JARVIS, Reply to Milner's End of Controversy. 12mo.....75
KEBLE'S Christian Year, handsomely printed..... 75
KIP'S Double Witness of the Church 1 00
KINGSLEY'S Sacred Choir..... 75
LYRA Apostolica. 18mo..... 50
LIGHT in the Dwelling. By the Author of "Peep of Day," etc. 8vo.....1 75
MARSHALL'S Notes on Episcopacy. Edited by Wainwright.....1 00
MANNING on the Unity of the Church. 16mo..... 75
MAURICE on the Kingdom of Christ.....2 50
MAGEE on Atonement and Sacrifice. 2 vols. 8vo.....

NEWMAN'S Sermons on Subjects of the Day.....1 00
NEWMAN'S Parochial Sermons. 2 vols.....5 00
NEWMAN'S Essay on Christian Doctrine. 8vo, paper cover, 25 cts.; cloth..... 50
OGILBY'S Lectures on the Church. 16mo..... 50
OGILBY on Lay Baptism. 12mo. 50
PAGET'S Tales of the Village. 3 vols. 16mo.....1 25
PALMER on the Church. Edited by Bishop Whittingham. 2 vols. 8vo.....5 00
PEARSON on the Creed. Edited by Dobson.....2 00
PULPIT Cyclopædia and Minister's Companion. 8vo, 600 pp., $2,50; sheep.....2 75
PSALTER, (The) or Psalms of David, pointed for chanting. Edited by Dr. Muhlenberg. 12mo, sheep, 50
Fine paper, black roan..... 75
SOUTHARD, "The Mystery of Godliness." 8vo..... 75
SKETCHES and Skeletons of 500 Sermons. By the Author of "The Pulpit Cyclopædia." 8vo.....2 50
SPENCER'S Christian Instructed. 1 00
SHERLOCK'S Practical Christian. 75
SPINCKE'S Manual of Private Devotion..... 75
SUTTON'S Disce Vivere, Learn to Live. 16mo..... 75
SMITH, Dr. Pye, on Scripture and Geology.....1 25
SWARTZ. Letters to my Godchild. 32 mo..... 38
TRENCH'S Notes on the Parables. 8vo.....1 75
TAYLOR'S Golden Grove..... 50
TAYLOR'S Holy Living and Dying 1 00
TAYLOR'S Episcopacy Asserted and Maintained..... 75
WILBERFORCE'S Manual for Communicants..... 38
WAINWRIGHT'S Music of the Church..... 50
WILSON'S Lectures on Colossians. 12mo..... 75
WILSON'S Sacra Privata. 16mo.. 75
WHISTON'S Constitution of the Holy Apostles, including the Canons. Translated by Dr. Chase. 8vo.....2 50
WYATT'S Christian Altar. New edition..... 38

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

THE

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

BY

J. D. MORELL, A. M.

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY," ETC.

NEW-YORK:
D. APPLETON & COMPANY, 200 BROADWAY.

PHILADELPHIA:
GEO. S. APPLETON, 164 CHESNUT-ST.

M.DCCC.XLIX.

Library of the
Theological Seminary
Princeton, N. J.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Page

ON THE FACULTIES OF THE HUMAN MIND 35

CHAPTER II.

ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE LOGICAL AND THE INTUITIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS 55

CHAPTER III.

ON THE PECULIAR ESSENCE OF RELIGION 82

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY 106

CHAPTER V.

ON REVELATION 127

CHAPTER VI.

ON INSPIRATION 147

CHAPTER VII.

ON CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY 180

383335

1894

CHAPTER VIII.

Page

ON THE ANALYSIS OF POPULAR THEOLOGY 206

CHAPTER IX.

ON FELLOWSHIP 229

CHAPTER X.

ON CERTITUDE 259

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE SIGNIFICANCY OF THE PAST 301

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE RELATION BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY 324

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

PREFACE.

In presenting to the public the following treatise on the "Philosophy of Religion," some few preliminary explanations are needful. First of all it may be right to acknowledge, that the design of it grew out of some of the reviews, which appeared upon a former work of the author's, entitled, "An Historical and Critical View of the Speculative Philosophy of Europe in the Nineteenth Century." The few and almost unavoidable remarks there made upon the relation between Religion and Philosophy, attracted, on the part of many critics and reviewers, a very disproportionate share of attention: while the different ways in which the subject was treated by them, not only showed a vast fluctuation of opinion among themselves upon the real questions involved, but proved to my own mind most decisively, that, in the majority of cases, no clear and philosophical views whatever existed, to guide the opinions of our popular writers upon a subject the most deeply interesting, and the most widely practical, of any that could possibly engage their thoughts and energies.

To specify particular instances now that the memory and the effect of them have alike gone by, would be more invidious than useful. I may simply state that the brief notice written by Professor Tholuck, in the "Litterarischer Anzeiger," and which alone appeared to me to regard the whole subject of Religion and Philosophy from a truly elevated point of view, prompted me, perhaps more than any other single motive, to commence a discussion, which he distinctly and advisedly declared to be *absolutely necessary*, ere a new vigor could be infused into the religious literature of our country. To write a little, and that little necessarily incomplete, upon a question that rests upon the very primary and most fundamental principles of human knowledge, I perceived, could not fail to lay open my sentiments and expressions, generally, to perpetual misconstruction: I determined, therefore, to develop the subject from the beginning, as far as possible in a connected and logical form; and the result of this determination is the volume now presented to the public.

Should any one look in these pages for a popular and attractive exposition of the question, I fear he will be disappointed. For, although I have attempted to put down my thoughts as *clearly* as I was able, yet I have designedly treated the whole matter from a purely philosophical point of view, and am fully aware that no one, who is from the first *indisposed* to accept the conclusions deduced, will be likely to derive much conviction, one way or the other, from what is here said, unless he take the pains to proceed step by step, and realize *for himself* the truth or falsehood of the

whole philosophy upon which it is based. To those who will do this with patient and unprejudiced minds, I am quite willing to leave the whole argument as it stands; unconcerned whether I or they may be found in the advance, so long as truth is either maintained or evolved by the process. But, for the sake of many others, who, alas! are more addicted to denounce and to scorn whatever they are unaccustomed to hear, than to search into its evidences with a high-minded and unwearied love for truth, I feel constrained to make a few observations, grounded upon an actual experience of the obstacles with which such discussions as these have commonly to contend.

1. And, first, I would refer to a remarkable term of reproach, which has become very common of late amongst certain classes in our country; I mean, that which stamps every attempt to view religion by the light of a higher philosophy than is current among themselves with the title of *Germanism*. This very convenient epithet — convenient because it serves well to hide the actual ignorance of its employers behind an imposing but absolutely meaningless expression—requires to be held up for a little to the light, that we may see what the crime really is which it essays to condemn.

Now, in the first place, it is not by any means obvious, at least to the uninitiated, that the fact of a thought, a notion, or a system of notions, coming from Germany, is any evidence against their truth or propriety. Thought, assuredly, is universal. We never ask, as honest inquirers, where a principle comes from, but whether it be true.

Perhaps there is no part of the world which has not contributed its share to the whole sum of human knowledge; and, certainly, it is the opinion of those best entitled to judge, that the soil of Germany has not been unfruitful in this respect. If the term Germanism indicate merely a pedantic and un-English *phraseology*, which some writers have thought fit to run into, there is little reason in applying it to any peculiar species of *ideas*, still less in saddling our neighbors across the Rhine with the burden of our own follies; but if the term is intended to indicate any distinctive mode of *thinking*, then it would be instructive for us to have this mode clearly expounded instead of denounced. Thus expounded, all might soon begin to comprehend its value, or its worthlessness; for there can certainly be nothing in German thinking which is inaccessible to the laws of reasoning, or rules of evidence; and, wherever a truth or a lie may spring from, it is no less a truth, and no *more* a lie, when it comes to us from one direction than when it comes to us from another.

Perhaps, however, we may gain some idea of what is meant by the epithet *Germanism*, by putting it by the side of the kindred expression, *Neology*—an expression which has the advantage of possessing at least a clear etymological meaning. The term Neology can, of course, be fitly applied to any conception that is *new*, be it what it may; and deeply enough has it needed all the elasticity of its native signification. It would be hard to say what phenomenon of German theological or philosophical literature has not, in its turn, borne this most comprehensive *soubriquet*. If it be asked,

what is the criticism of Semler and his school?—the approved answer is, *Neology*. What is the moral theology of Kant? Neology. What is the subjective idealism of Fichte, or the absolute idealism of Hegel? Neology. What is the mysticism of Hamann or Baader—what the deep, earnest spiritualism of Schleiermacher? Neology. What, in fine, is the theology of Neander, of Nitzsch, of Daub, De Wette, Rothe, and Hundeshagen? All alike, Neology. And if we had now the deep intuitional theology of St. John, or the broad anti-ceremonial spirit of St. Paul amongst us, sure I am that they might too justly be termed *Neology* also; for novel indeed would be the contrast with which the thoughts of such minds as these would stand out, amongst all the miserable strifes we are now used to witness over a thousand paltry prejudices of form and rubric, of denomination and party, all of which might well be dispensed with without touching, *in one single point*, the great essential features of Christianity itself.

As a distinctive and significant expression, the term Neology, as also that of Germanism, has become absolutely without any other meaning than that of pointing out something which is new to *us*, or differs from *our own* system. Were some well-meaning, narrow-minded Lutheran to take the works of Cudworth, Jeremy Taylor, and Henry More, —were he to add those of Collins, Chubb, and Shaftsbury, —were he next to point out the Puritanical theology of the old Calvinistic school,—were he then to come down to more modern times, and heap together Dr. Pusey, Sidney Smith, Baptist Noel, Chalmers, Carlisle, Robert Owen, James Mar-

tineau, and Archbishop Whateley, and stamp all these with the names of Anglicism and Neology, he would not be one atom more unreasonable in his procedure, or link together phenomena one atom more heterogeneous, than is perpetually done by those who throw the German theologians and philosophical speculators together into one generalization, and characterize their systems by one single, and that a national, epithet.

That Germany has given rise to much that is oppposed to real Christianity, and subversive of all genuine faith in God, is, unhappily, true: but it has not been at all more fruitful in schemes of Infidelity than our own country: nor has it encouraged by any means so largely as we have the grovelling spirit of a utilitarian and materialistic philosophy. The only difference is, that, whilst *our* unbelievers have nurtured the spirit of Infidelity in a low, vulgar, and unimposing form, *theirs* have stormed the fortresses of the faith with an array of learning, and a mental intensity, to which we can make but small pretension. But it should not be forgotten, that, where learning can be a bane, there it can also be an antidote; and such assuredly it has been in Germany. They who are unacquainted with the literature, the criticism, and the Christian philosophy of that country, can easily afford to despise it; but I can soberly say, that, amongst all those who have taken the pains to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the best productions of the German mind, I never knew *one* (and I have known many), who did not esteem the privilege of doing so amongst the greatest he had ever enjoyed. It is common to speak particularly of the *mysticism* of the German theologians. Such an opinion, I am bold

to say, is, in the great majority of instances, only accountable for on the principle, that every thing appears mystical to us before we comprehend it. But if there are any number of theologians in the world who have less than ordinary title to the charge of mysticism, that number is to be found amongst the German writers; for they, of all others, have been the most fruitful in historical research, in keen-sighted criticism, and in the development of the fixed laws of our spiritual nature.

Whilst, therefore, those who earnestly and patiently study the literature of Germany bear testimony to its depth, its freshness, its compass, and its clear-sightedness, the evidence is surely in favor of its high value to those who can use it aright. This being the case, we can in future only afford to regard the indiscriminate condemnation of those who have not investigated the subject in the light of the monk's famous warning, who, at the revival of literature, is reported to have declaimed against the study of Greek and Hebrew, as infallibly ending in each admirer becoming, on the one side a Pagan, or on the other side a Jew.

My purpose in making these remarks about German literature is, not at all to offer a justification or apology for any use of it I have thought right to make in the following pages; but simply to deprecate the unmeaning employment of an epithet which can appeal to nothing but the prejudices of the ignorant. Very few, indeed, if any, of the *data* which I have assumed are peculiarly German in their character; and if some of the results of German thought and analysis have been incorporated into my own views and opinions, yet

they are all presented as deductions from the data primarily laid down, and are only to be accepted upon such evidence as is accessible to any reflecting mind.

2. Another popular charge against investigations such as are contained in the present volume is, that of *Rationalism*. This term, like those above mentioned, is perpetually used without any definite meaning being attached to it. Many persons seem to imagine that our unquestionable duty, as sincere Christians, is, to accept the whole traditionary theology in which we may happen to be educated, without any investigation whatever; and that we become guilty of Rationalism the moment we begin to ask ourselves for a *reason* of the hope that is in us, beyond a certain circle of approved and acknowledged evidences. Yet the spirit of the present age is such, that men *will* demand a reason of some kind for every thing which is offered to their acceptance. Even those who appeal most strenuously to the dictates of authority, are fain to show cause for doing so; and they who deny that a reason is ever to be rendered for their faith, yet are not proof against the weakness, if such it be, of proffering their own *reasons* for thinking so. The age of blind authority is hopelessly past; intellectual submission has no chance of gaining votaries now-a-days, unless, at any rate, the homage is paid to their faculties of showing such submission to be something *perfectly reasonable*.

Now, the only distinct idea which I am able to attach to the term Rationalism is, the effort to reduce the whole essence of Christianity to a logical or scientific product, and the denial of there being any thing contained in it beyond the facts

which actually are, or which can be, contained in a connected series of propositions. The Rationalist begins by laying down his definitions in approved form; he goes on next to deduce certain conclusions from them; and then follows up his train of reasoning, step by step, until he has brought his entire faith into a complete logical system. This system, according to his view of it, *is* Christianity; the profession of its truth is the profession of Christianity; and to believe the propositions in question, is to be a Christian.

For myself, I am far from having any sympathy with Rationalism, either in its spirit or its results. To me, Christianity, in its essence, appears *a deep inward life of the soul*, —a life which cannot be accounted for by any scientific analysis, which cannot be expressed in any number of propositions, but which, in its evidences, in its conceptions, in its holy impulses and anticipations, lies quite beyond the region of the logical understanding. The Divine elements of Christian truth are such that, to my mind, they need no other evidence than their being clearly *perceived;* no other evidence, I believe, can fully reach them. They cannot be deduced from any definitions; they cannot be proved by any strictly logical process; they come to us as immediate *revelations* from God, and to behold them as revealed, is at once to know and to believe. If I possess the Christian life, I have the witness of the truth *within* me. If I possess it not, I may, it is true, possess a system of formal doctrine; but that system, as it appears to the logical faculty, has much about the same resemblance to Christianity itself, as a skeleton has to a living man.

I strongly suspect, indeed, that the charge of Rationalism, if it is to be made *at all*, is really more justly attributable to the very persons who are in the habit of thoughtlessly fixing it upon their fellow-Christians, than to any one else. Sure I am, that, if the germs of religious Rationalism exist any where in our country,—if there are principles possessed by any party which involve in them all that the most uncompromising Rationalist could demand, those germs and those principles are to be found amongst the strenuous assertors of the doctrine of private judgment *in its intellectual acceptation*, although that doctrine may be coupled *at present* with the most perfect orthodoxy of theological opinion. It is not my intention to offer here the evidence of what I now affirm; it will be found, I trust, sufficiently expounded in various portions of the work itself, and particularly in the chapter upon *Certitude* in the domain of religious truth. I merely design by these few remarks to repel, in the outset, the charge of Rationalism, and to whisper into the ears of those most likely, perhaps, to prefer it, the admonition, to be quite sure of the soundness of *their own* principles, and to see to it that they do not themselves secretly foster in their own bosom the viper, which they imagine to be inserting its poison only into the heart of others.

3. There is yet a third expression which is often used in opposition to the employment of philosophical analysis in the department of religion,—namely, that in so doing we are departing from the *simplicity of the Gospel*. Now, here, let it be observed, first of all, that there is a great difference between religion, and the philosophy of religion. We are

far from supposing that all the metaphysical analyses entered into in the following pages are in any sense whatever necessary to the existence or the perfection of religion, either in an individual mind, or in the world at large. The more simple a thing is in itself, the more spontaneous in its rise and activity,—just so much more deep and recondite is the process by which it can be *reflectively* realized and explained. Nothing is more simple and natural than the perception of the external world by the senses; and yet there has been no fact in the nature and operations of the human mind, which has more taxed the analytic powers of the mental philosopher than this,—none which has demanded a deeper insight into the first principles of human knowledge. A very complex and peculiar phenomenon is comparatively easy to analyze and account for; it is the simple, native, and spontaneous operations of the mind which demand all our powers of analysis, ere they can be reflectively comprehended and philosophically explained.

So it is with respect to the religious nature of man. The very simplicity of its operations is the main cause of the recondite analysis, which must be employed in order to render a due account of them; so that we are rather bearing testimony to the simplicity of the religious life, instead of departing from it, by employing the most subtle metaphysical analysis in its elucidation.

There are some, however, who may probably affirm that we are here departing from the simplicity of the Gospel, not so much in our *processes*, as in our actual *results*. Now, of all the set phrases which roll thoughtlessly out of the lips of

the most thoughtless in the present age, I do not believe there is any one more delusive than this. It is one of those favorite positions upon which a self-assumed infallibility imagines itself competent to plant itself, and thence to repudiate every religious idea upon which its own seal of authority is not enstamped. Men the least inured to habits of close thinking, the least furnished with impressive learning, the least trained to the work of criticism, the least prepared to look beneath the surface of words and the traditions of a party, can thus assume a direct superiority over the most laborious and earnest investigators of truth, by claiming to possess for themselves, above them all, *the simplicity of the Gospel.* If any one could prove, in his own case, a special enlightenment from heaven, which takes the place of all human effort; or if any one could show that he is the subject of some infallible guidance, that raises him above the level of those who have to use only human instruments in interpreting the revelations of Christianity; I, for one, would be the first to bow in silent submission and awe to his authority: but the marks of such a distinction must be very evident in the intellect, the heart, the life, the whole personality of the agent; and the simplicity of the Gospel must be at least as manifest in his whole spirit as it claims to be in his formal doctrine.

The Simplicity of the Gospel! Alas for the force of habit and association! how simple to every one appears the system of truth on which his whole mental education has been constructed!* There is not a man on the face of this earth, for

* A friend who has been in the East lately communicated to me the following anecdote:—"He had been arguing for some time with a

whom a narrow education has marked out the whole cycle of his ideas, who does not think his system of truth the most divinely simple of all, and, consequently, look upon every other as encumbered with darkness, sinuosity, and confusion. It is not till our faith is shaken in mere human systems of theology, as such, that we begin to judge of this matter of simplicity with a new light shed upon it.

The Simplicity of the Gospel! If there is one thing, which I can affirm, with all sincerity, has urged me forward, more than any other, in every investigation, in every analysis, in every religious inquiry—it is the consciousness that the simplicity of the Gospel is a thing now but too rarely met with, either in doctrine or in practice, and the longing to realize it apart from the traditions of eighteen centuries, and unencumbered with the distorting influences of party, passion and prejudice. Deeply as I am convinced that every great doctrine, which has swayed a moral influence over mankind, has a real fundamental truth in it; yet I am far from seeing in the bare intellectual and speculative system of those who talk most about simplicity—(absorbing, as that system assuredly has, all kinds of human accretions, from the philosophy of the Gnostics down to that of the latest scholasticism,) all the simplicity they usually attribute to it. The temptation by a literal serpent in Paradise; the federal union of all

Mohammedan upon the evidences of Christianity, and apparently with some success. At length, the Mohammedan, after listening for some time, exclaimed,—'I tell you what it is, Rajah, you Franks are very clever people: God has given you the power to make ships, and houses, and penknives, and do a great many wonderful things; but he has granted to us what he has denied to you—the knowledge of the true religion.'"

mankind in Adam; the imputation of the actual guilt of our first parents to ourselves; the various covenants enumerated, as formally established between God and man; the Athanasian explanation of the Trinity; the eternal procession of the Son; the imputation of righteousness; unconditional election; the moral inability of man placed side by side with his free agency on the one hand and his eternal condemnation on the other; and many more doctrines which it is needless to mention,—these, however stirring and awful in their nature, cannot certainly be regarded as forming a system peculiarly characterized by its simplicity.

I am not affirming or denying, at present, the truth or untruth of any one of them; I believe, that, stripped of their philosophical perversions, they all contain a moral meaning, which has a Divine power and simplicity in it; but, assuredly, it appears to me an extraordinary charge to bring against any one who seeks to unravel the cumbrous theology of the scholastic ages, and penetrate into the simple ideas which have lived and acted by a most wonderful principle of vitality, through all the stifling influence of perpetual human incrustations,—that he is departing, by so doing, from *the Simplicity of the Gospel of Christ.*

The expression, however, on which we are now remarking may be employed in a twofold acceptation; it may refer, namely, to simplicity in doctrine, or to simplicity in moral inculcation and practice. In neither of these points of view am I disposed to yield an entire monopoly of Christian simplicity to those who are for the most part so apt, exclusively, to claim it. Where, I ask, are we to look for simplicity in

doctrine? Are we to look to the dogmatic theology of separate communities, or are we to look to the broad features of Christian truth as it has impressed itself upon the minds, and fixed itself in the affections of the truly pious, in the organic development of Christianity throughout every age? It is the eager grasping after a precise logical system (infinitely too precise and too exactly adapted to a partial and peculiar mode of thought), which has, in fact, stripped our Christian doctrine of all its simplicity: it is this which has burdened it with the philosophical phrases, the logical definitions, the narrow, partial, and mundane views we have so often to contend with, and hidden the truth of God under the scanty verbiage of a denominational technology. And yet, strange to say, the strict adherents to all the most pointed, formal, and technical dogmas are constantly exclaiming against the sin and the folly of running into ABSTRACTIONS: as though such a theology as I describe did not consist, beyond every other, of the purest abstractions; or as though the logical sharpness of our definitions rendered our knowledge an atom more concrete than it was before. How much does the lesson need yet to be learned, that the deep stirrings of a religious life within the heart, and the elevation of our purest moral sympathies through the Gospel of Christ, are the true channels of all that is *concrete* and *positive* in religion, while theological propositions (except so far as they are penetrated by such a spiritual life) are the real abstractions, the abuse of which we have most to fear. We can pity the deluded men who substitute the superstitious reverence of saints, relics, and images for the veneration and the heartfelt worship of God;

we do not suspect that at the same moment, and within our own communities, there are multitudes who are practising a substitution equally fatal to all that is most elevated in the Christian life—the substitution of terms, phrases, and propositions, for the vital power of the religion of Christ. I contend, therefore, most earnestly for this position—that the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ, free from philosophy of man, and free from barren abstractions, is to be looked for, not in our *logical systems* of doctrine, but in the clear elimination from all systems, or rather from the religious intuitions of *all good men*, of the vital and essential elements of Christian faith and love, hope and joy.

If we pass from the idea of simplicity in doctrine to simplicity in the Christian life and practice, here, I believe, similar conclusions to those above stated will become manifest. Simplicity of life and practice, I fear, is too rarely to be found amongst those most deeply engaged in the party strifes and mere denominational agitations of the day. Certain it is, as those well know who are much involved in it, that the *tendency* of what we may term the public religious excitement of the age is rather to destroy simplicity of mind than to produce it, and to lead us insensibly into that same diplomatic habit of action which we find in the contentions of political, and other purely secular interests. Christian simplicity is rather to be looked for in those calm, elevated, devotional, philanthropic minds, *amongst all parties*, who have risen above the prejudices and contentions of their times, who have left others to waste their heaven-gifted faculties in trifling disputes and minor differences, and with

hearts burning at once with love to God and man, have devoted themselves to the highest contemplation of the Divine, and to the most pressing wants of humanity at large.

4. And this leads me to notice yet a fourth objection, which is not unfrequently urged against all modern excursions into the domain of Christian theology:—Of what utility, it is urged, can all such philosophizing be? We have the Gospel in our hands: that is the great instrument of human salvation: every thing beside is powerless and vain. Objections like this are humbling to contend with, inasmuch as they betray a want of reflection, which it is painful to meet with amongst men of influence and reputed education. If the argument above mentioned (which I have often heard most strenuously urged) has any meaning, it implies one of two things, which I shall successively describe.

First, it may imply that the distinct intention of all those against whom it is directed, is to *substitute* their philosophical system for the Gospel. A more gratuituos supposition it were impossible to make. The object of every true Christian philosopher is not in any way to supersede the Gospel, but to illustrate and apply it in its full brightness and power. All great systems of philosophy are simply *methods*: they do not give us the material of truth, they only teach us how to realize it—to make it reflective—to construct it into a system. The bearing of all true philosophy upon religion, is infinitely far from offering any substitute for the divine revelations of Christ to the world; it aims rather at assisting us to gaze with greater intensity, and less commixture of a mere human element, upon the truth itself. Much has been

said about transcendentalism, (a thing the meaning of which is seldom very clearly defined,) as though it brought to us any new truth or another Gospel. It might as well be said that Whateley's logic brings us another Gospel. The one is no more a system of belief than the other. What is the critical philosophy of Kant but a *method?* What is the philosophical system of Jacobi, of Hegel, of Schleiermacher, but in each case a *method?* Nothing is more common amongst those who renounce the idea of having aught to do with *these* different philosophies, than the elevation of the Baconian system as the true method to be followed in all theological inquiry. What, then, if we had raised the outcry, that these philosophical divines were substituting Baconianism for the Gospel! How should we have been overwhelmed with charges of absurdity! But yet I am prepared to maintain, that there would be no greater absurdity in such a charge, than there actually is in almost all the denunciations we now hear against the study of philosophy, and its employment in theological research. True, it might be rejoined; but see to what frightful results these philosophical systems are leading! To which I reply, that any thing, even the very best, may be abused: that there have been men ready to turn the grace of God into licentiousness; and that, if those who shudder at the bare idea of transcendentalism are fain to show its affiliation with all kinds of atheistical and pantheistical notions, it is *just as easy* to show how, by a like affiliation and abuse, the empiricism of Bacon is chargeable with all kinds of materialistic and equally atheistical results.

Let us pass on, however, to the other point above referred to. The objection, that we have the Gospel, and that this is enough, if it do not imply that philosophy is intended to be a *substitute* for Christianity, can only serve to express on the part of its advocates some idea of this sort. We of this present age possess Christianity *in its full intensity:* we comprehend it at length in its height and its depth: human thought can now penetrate no further into its truths: human investigation can throw no more light upon them. Such, then, being the case, what is the use of any further endeavors to transcend what has already attained the *ne plus ultra* of completeness and perfection?

Were this, we reply, really the case, mankind might of course give up all further investigation into the domain of religious truth, and content themselves with this ultimatum; but we trust there are very few intelligent and earnest readers, who do not clearly enough comprehend the difference between truth as it exists unchangeably to the mind of God, and truth as it enters into the various systems of human thought and opinion. It does not follow that, because God in his mercy has given us the divine germs and principles of religious truth in the Gospel, *therefore* we know every thing that is to be known, and have realized to ourselves all that can be realized about it; and sad it is when men so far forget themselves, or suffer themselves to be so far deluded, as to make their own peculiar system identical with the Gospel of the blessed God in its divine breadth, depth, and intensity.

What renders, moreover, such an objection as I am

cansidering the more striking and the more painful to encounter, is the fact, which few deeply religious minds will be inclined to dispute, that, if there be one thing more wanting in the present age than another, it is a *high ideal* of the Christian life in its combined experimental and practical bearings. Of Christian *profession*, indeed, there is abundance; and to those who think "a *decided profession*" of Christianity the great consummation to be aimed at, the above remark may appear very superfluous. But is it not manifest to any reflecting mind, that the *profession* of Christianity could not possibly be made of any account, except in times and under circumstances in which there is nothing very high or distinctive in its *practice?* The proper profession of Christianity *is* its practice; and were that practice based upon an elevated ideal of Christian duty, the inquiry as to a man's profession would be as much out of place as an inquiry respecting a Howard, whether he *professed* a love for humanity, and a desire to promote human happiness.

It is, in fact, a high practical ideal of the real nature and purity of the Christian life which, amidst all the profession of the present age, is most deeply wanting. Scruples there are in abundance, if *they* constituted practical Christianity; cases of conscience enough, if they indicated a high perception of moral duty; formal and precise regulations in superfluity respecting the intercourse of *professors* with the world, if they were of any avail to insure the purity of the Christian life; but, with all this, where is the community of professed Christians, who would stand out in clear moral relief above the rest of mankind, were not their separation

marked off by customs, habits, usages, and *professions*, which form no essential part of Christianity at all? Do not all good men feel that the separation between the Church and the world, as it now for the most part exists, is a thing purely artificial, and that (leaving out of course the worthless of mankind) we seldom look for any higher principles of action or duty in the one than we do in the other? The very eagerness which is manifest to make that separation clearer by habits and rules, perfectly non-essential, is the most certain proof that the really *essential* distinction is not great enough to dispense with some other line of demarcation.

I am not intending, by these remarks, to say that Christianity is a dead letter in this our country: far from it; but I mean, that we look in vain for a very high ideal of it amongst any Christian community. Often there is much earnest, sincere, unassuming piety in the world, where the "professors," perhaps, would deny its very existence; and often there is *none at all*, where the very perfection of Christianity is arrogated. Much of the Christian element pervades *all* earnest and sober-thinking men of our day, whatever they may profess; but as for fixing our eye upon any one point, and saying—Here is the truth in its fulness and its perfection, both as a theory and a practice,—such happiness, I fear, it is not for us in the present age to aspire after. Individuals there are, and ever have been, in whom a very high ideal of the Christian life has been realized; but the very wonder and admiration with which they are regarded, proves the depressed standard of those around them; while their existence, equally, amongst all parties, shows how little the

true elevation of the Christian character depends upon those points, about which the different portions of the Church are mainly contending.

The conclusion which it concerns us, then, to draw from the above remarks is this,—that the existing state of Christianity amongst those who profess it does not warrant the objection, that all further advance in the development of the perception we possess, of its nature and application, is impracticable, or unnecessary. If we *have* the perfect conception of Christianity, we are making a lamentably imperfect application of it; for the world, alas! is to a very small extent under its power; if we have *not* the perfect conception of it, then every attempt to regard it from a more lofty moral point of view should be welcomed as a real and earnest attempt for the highest welfare of mankind.

5. There is only *one* other point to which I would allude; and that is, the objection which some persons may make to investigations such as the following on the ground of their being *premature*. For myself, I cannot think that what is seen and felt to be *true* can ever be premature. That there is a great evil in rashly unsettling the faith of any one, without pointing him to a principle of faith still higher, I readily admit. But I cannot see that in stripping away mere logical accretions from the vital germs of primitive Christianity, there is any real danger of shaking the faith of any truly confiding mind, however much it may shake the dogmatical systems of many who look to the form more than they look to the essence of their religion.

On the other hand, is there no danger from the practice—

which I must term as demoralizing as it is antichristian—of keeping up an *outward* respect for theological sentiments when they have been inwardly abjured? That there are some opinions officially professed, and others tacitly held, even by many of the public teachers of religion, the former of which they virtually reject, and the latter of which they never make manifest in their open ministrations, is a fact which most observing persons will be ready enough to admit; and to me it has ever appeared, that the habit thus formed of regarding certain things as premature, and concealing them carefully from the ears of the multitude, is a proceeding calculated beyond almost all others to destroy moral earnestness and self-respect in the teacher, and to shake all spontaneous confidence in the hearers. Better even to incur the charge of rashness from the few, than to lose our credit for the most unbending honesty in the minds of the many.

But the charge of prematureness, perchance, may be brought, if not against the sentiments themselves, yet against the preparedness of the author to venture upon the stream of theological speculation. This objection it is not for me to deal with; nor is it one from which I am at all anxious to free myself. The views I have maintained I wish to be discussed simply and solely upon *their own* evidence; and if the immaturity of the mind of the writer be any reason for distrusting them, they will only have the advantage of so much the severer scrutiny—a scrutiny which cannot fail, whatever else be the result, of subserving the real interests of truth. I would say, indeed, quite openly, once for all,

that I have no peculiar *system* I feel myself bound to maintain,—no human dogmas I design to espouse, as points which I am pledged to defend. What I have written I wrote from the firmest conviction of its embodying truth, so far as I had as yet realized it; and the same freedom of thought which conducted me to these, will, I trust, ever be ready to conduct to any other conclusions which can be shown to rest as firmly upon the real evidences to which all such questions must finally appeal.

Lest any, however, should suppose that I am rushing hastily and unpreparedly into the region of *theological* inquiry, I may be allowed to add, that, while philosophy has been the highest recreation, theology has ever been the serious business of my whole life. To the study of this science I gave my earliest thoughts: under the guidance of one who is recognized by all parties as standing amongst the leading theologians of our age, I pursued it through many succeeding years; and if I have found any intense pleasure, or felt any deep interest in philosophy at large, it has been derived, *mainly*, from the consciousness of its high importance, as bearing upon the vastest moral and religious interests of mankind.

Moreover, I have not drawn the conclusions now set forth, irrespective of the support of other minds, and the weight of grave authority. For without mentioning many of the professed theologians of Germany, whose names appear amongst the most learned and devoted men of their age, I know not that I have asserted a single result, the germs and principles of which are not patent in the writings of

various of the most eminent theologians of the Church of England, or of other orthodox communities.

To many of the *philosophical* thinkers, likewise, of this and other countries, I feel myself greatly indebted; not so much, indeed, for any *direct* assistance they have afforded me in analyzing the subject in hand, as for the part they have contributed in the gradual development of the whole mode of thinking which is here employed. If there be one mind, however, whose personality may have impressed itself more than any other upon my own, in tracing out the whole course of the following treatise, it is assuredly that of the revered Schleiermacher; indeed, the analysis of the idea of religion and its reference to the absolute feeling of dependence, is taken substantially out of the introduction to his great work, the "Glaubenslehre." That God would send such a mind, and such a heart, to shed their influence upon ourselves, and guide us from the barren region of mere logical forms, into the hallowed paths of a divine life, is the best wish I can breathe for the true welfare of every religious community in our land.*

* Little as is the progress which the lofty spiritual principles of Schleiermacher have openly made in this country, yet there are very significant indications of their gradual development. I would particularly call attention to the "Biblical Review," as taking frequently an eminently broad and philosophical ground in discussing the nature of Religion and the basis of Christian Theology.

Hampstead, Jan. 1, 1849.

THE

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE FACULTIES OF THE HUMAN MIND.

WHATEVER may be the religion proper to man, its real nature, and its possible intensity, must depend upon the constitution of the human mind. If the human faculties were of a lower order than they really are, it is obvious that our religious consciousness could never reach the standard to which it now rightly aspires. The reason of this becomes manifest, when we consider that under such circumstances the real objects of religious worship could not be in the same sense accessible to us; and that, as a natural consequence of this, the emotions arising from their contemplation must be proportionably modified and diminished. If, on the other hand, we possessed a combination of faculties of an order superior to those which the human mind now enjoys, then our enlarged powers of thought and feeling, and the widened range of our actual experience, would naturally elevate our whole religious being, when once awakened, to a proportionally higher degree of development. Accordingly, since the whole aspect of our religious experiences must depend

upon the natural capacities with which we have been endowed, our first object in discussing the *philosophy of religion* must be to make some inquiry into the powers and faculties of the human mind.

Now, first, whenever we speak of the mind, or use the expression, "*myself*," what is it, we would ask, that we really intend to designate? What is it in which the mind of man *essentially* consists? Evidently it does not essentially consist in any bodily organization, for this is mere machinery with which the pure idea of self—that which moves and directs the organized frame—can have no proper identity. As evidently, it cannot consist in the whole apparatus of our sensational nature; for this implies merely the system of means and influences, by which the outward world acts upon us, and by no means indicates the real man himself, to whom these influences appeal. Sensations are experienced *by* the mind; but I can never say that the whole sum of my sensations *is* the mind, or constitutes what I mean by the word "*self*." Neither, lastly, can the real man be the complex of our thoughts, ideas, or conceptions. These indicate simply the existence of logical forms, intellectual laws, or perceptive faculties, which are essentially the same in all minds; they do not express the real concrete individual man; they do not involve the element, which makes each human being entirely distinct from the whole mass of humanity around him; in a word, they do not constitute our *personality*.

By this process of analysis we find at length that the central point of our consciousness—that which makes each man what he is in distinction from every other man—that which expresses the real concrete essence of the mind, apart from its regulative laws and formal processes, is *the will*. Will expresses power, spontaneity, the capacity of acting independently, and for ourselves. If this spontaneity be withdrawn, our life sinks down at once into a mere link in that

mighty chain of cause and effect by which all the operations of nature are carried on from the commencement to the end of time. Without will man would flow back from the elevation he now assumes, to the level of impersonal nature,—in a word, we should then be *things*, and not *men* at all. Spontaneity, personality, will, self, these then, and all similar words, express as nearly as possible the *essential nature or principle* of the human mind. We do not say, indeed, that we can comprehend the very essence of the soul itself, *apart* from all its determinations; but that, by deep reflection upon our inmost consciousness, we can comprehend the essence of the soul in connection with its operations; that we can trace it through all its changes as a *power* or pure activity; and that in this spontaneous activity alone our real personality consists. If, therefore, in our subsequent classification of the faculties of the mind little appears to be said about the will, it must be remembered that we assume the activity it denotes, as the essential basis of our whole mental being, and suppose it consequently to *underlie* all our mental operations.

Such, then, being the clearest idea we can form of the essence of the mind, we must next proceed to the more important task of analyzing its various determinations or modes of operation. These determinations regarded *individually* are endlessly diversified, each moment presenting in succession new phenomena. In enumerating the faculties, however, what we have in view is to make a careful *classification* of the individual states of consciousness; to let their minor and unessential variations disappear; to neglect, for the moment, the external objects to which they stand related; and thus to seize upon *the great fundamental and subjective forms* of our mental activity.

The first and broadest distinction which we can make in classifying these internal operations is that which separates our mental phenomena into two classes—those relating to the

acquisition of knowledge on the one side, and those subserving impulse and activity on the other. We may term the operations of the former kind *intellectual;* those of the latter kind *emotional.* Remembering, then, that the power of the will runs through the whole, we may regard these two classes as exhausting the entire sum of our mental phenomena.

Between the intellectual and the emotional activity, however, there always subsists a direct correspondency. Just on the same principle as we saw, that a higher development of our whole intellectual capacity would imply a possibly higher development of the religious nature; so also in every succeeding stage to which the consciousness, intellectually speaking, attains, there is always associated with such an advancement a proportionally higher order of emotion. Our intellectual and our emotional life, in fact, run parallel with one another, and develope themselves correlatively; so that we may draw out a table of the successive stages of human consciousness in the following manner:—

MIND
commencing in
MERE FEELING (undeveloped unity)
evinces a
TWOFOLD ACTIVITY.

	I. *Intellectual.*		II. *Emotional.*
1st Stage.	The Sensational consciousness	(to which correspond)	The Instincts.
2d Stage.	The Perceptive consciousness	"	Animal Passions.
3d Stage.	The Logical consciousness	"	Relational Emotions.
4th Stage.	The Intuitional consciousness	"	Æsthetic, moral, and religious Emotions.

meeting in

FAITH—(highest or developed Unity.)

To expound and develope this scheme (which is the main object of the present chapter), let us direct our attention first of all to the dim, indefinable state of consciousness, from which our whole subsequent mental history takes its rise, and which we have designated bare Feeling. Such an indefinable ground, we conceive, exists, historically speaking, at the base of our mental development. That whole confused complex of man's sensational, instinctive, and nascent intellectual life, which appears to characterize the earliest infancy, before any actual distinction can be drawn between the efforts of intelligence and emotion, may be regarded as the primitive unity, in the cloudy region of which our whole after development finds its commencement. It is the *root*, hidden under the soil, and away from the eye of consciousness, out of which the tree of spiritual life secretly germinates.

Having thus barely indicated the primitive unity, the state of undefined feeling, from which we take our start along the pathway of mental development, we may proceed to consider the lowest stage of consciousness, in which the distinction between our intellectual and emotional life can be discerned; and that is, the *sensational consciousness*. The sensational consciousness (viewed entirely apart from any other mental phenomena), is that in which the mind, while impressed from outward and material causes, yet is occupied simply and solely with its own inward or subjective impressions. As we are now constituted, we possess a material organism, which has a direct and mysterious connection with the sensitive mind. The affections of this organism produce mental feelings; and it is the attention of the mind directed to these feelings, simply *as feelings*, that we denominate sensation.*

* It is not strictly correct to say that a sensation is the bare feeling produced by the presence of an external object, and consequently a

If we could by any means transport ourselves into the mind of an infant before the perceptive consciousness is awakened, we should find it in a state of absolute isolation from every thing else in the world around it. It has as yet no conception of the existence of any thing beyond itself. Whatever objects may be presented to the eye, the ear, or the touch, they are treated simply as subjective feelings, without the mind's possessing any consciousness of them *as objects* at all. Every child, therefore, at birth, is literally a little Idealist—spontaneously and necessarily so. To it the inward world is *every thing*, and the outward world is *nothing*.†

Under the influence of our life-long experience, we do not find it easy to separate any sensation we experience from its external cause. The moment the feeling is experienced, and the mind directed to it, the power of association irresistibly calls up the object from which it arises. The only case, perhaps, in which we experience any thing analogous to what we have described as being the state of the infant mind, occurs sometimes amongst the phenomena of dreaming. If we are suffering from any bodily pain, and fall asleep during the endurance of it, we often lose sight entirely of the cause of the pain, but still remain conscious of a restless and unhappy *state of mind*, which seems to have no connection whatever with the external world, or with our own bodily organization. Such a dream is the waking state

passive process. The external object affects only our *organism*—it is the mind directing its attention to these organic affections, in which sensation really consists. See Hamilton's Reid, p. 881. Also Aristotle de Animâ, l. iii. c. 8, sec. 2.

† In animals, whose lives are throughout more instinctive than is that of man, the perceptive consciousness seems to be awakened synchronously with the sensational. If it be asserted that this is the case with man also, yet still it is quite possible to separate the two states by analysis, though they may never have been separated *de facto*.

of infancy. All the impressions of sense, when they reach the mind, appear simply as the spontaneous changes of that mind itself. As far as the world is concerned, infancy *is* a sleep.

Against this view of the infant mind, an exception might be taken, from the fact that there are certain acts performed, such as sucking, swallowing, &c., which seem to indicate some consciousness of an objective reality. This leads us to consider the state of consciousness parallel with sensation, on the practical or emotional side of our scheme. As sensation is the first waking up of the intellectual, so is *instinct* the primary movement of the practical life. In sensation and instinct, the whole being, intellectual and practical, is as yet concentrated. But be it remarked, that, just as in sensation, there is, up to this point of our consciousness, no reference whatever to the external world as a cause; so also in instinct, there is a blind obedience to a certain impulse, but no necessary conception that the effect of this impulse is exerted upon any thing out of and distinct from the mind itself. Accordingly, the primary state of man is a purely ideal state; if the infant *could* then be a philosopher, it would agree with Fichte, that it constitutes of itself the whole universe, and that every phenomenon it beholds is the creation of its own subjective nature.

This sleep of the soul, however, does not long continue. The shades of the night, from which it comes, gradually disperse; and as they disperse, it begins to arouse itself to the distinct consciousness of the outward world. We may compare this process to that *dozing state* in which we sometimes lie for a time, ere we are fully awake, speculating as to *where* we are, and what are the objects around us. Or we might better liken it, perhaps, to the recovery from a swoon, in which we often attempt for some time to account for the strange position and circumstances in which we find our-

selves. Such a waking, only more gradual in the process, is the transition of the mind from the sensational to the perceptive consciousness—from the first to the second stage of our mental development.

Perception indicates the state of consciousness in which the mind, getting beyond itself, attributes the impressions it experiences to the existence of external things. We often see this process manifesting itself in the child, as it advances beyond the first few months of its helplessness. A sight or a sound, which at first produced simply an involuntary start, now awakens a smile or a look of recognition. The mind is evidently struggling *out of itself*; it begins to throw itself into the objects around, and to live in the world of outward realities. Here, then, we see a state of consciousness gradually effected, which is *diametrically opposite* to the foregoing. In the former case, the subject existed alone and for itself; now, on the contrary, it fixes its contemplation so earnestly upon the outward reality, that every thing of a subjective nature disappears.

The real nature of the sensational and of the perceptive consciousness can, therefore, now be best appreciated together. The organism with which we are endowed is in some way affected from without. The attention of the mind, as an active and intelligent principle, is drawn towards this affection, and a certain state of consciousness succeeds. If, on the one hand, we regard the organism as belonging to self—as being, as it were, included *in it*, and contemplate the affection it undergoes as an affection of the subject, the result is a *sensation*. If, on the other hand, we regard the organism as a material structure, out of or beyond the subject, having the varied qualities of form, extension, &c.—qualities entirely distinct from Mind, or the Me, then *perception* is the result. In the one case, there is implied a direct, although spontaneous and unreflective, consciousness of *mind*, or of the unit

termed *self;* in the other case, there is a similar consciousness of matter and its properties. The two processes both find their field of observation in the organization with which we are furnished; but they stand to each other as opposite poles in relation to their respective subjective and objective tendencies. Pure sensation is wholly subjective—pure perception is wholly objective. And with reference to that mixed state of consciousness by which the greater part of our life is characterized, we observe this law to hold good—that the strength of the sensation is proportional to the weakness of the perception, and the clearness of the perception proportional to the dimness of the sensation. In other words, the more we think of the affection, the less we think of the object; and the more we are absorbed in the object, the less regard we pay to the affection itself.*

The great use, as well as peculiarity, then, of the perceptive consciousness, is to bring the subject and the object face to face with each other, through the medium of the bodily organism. Were we obliged to *infer* the existence of an objective reality from our own mental affections; were our belief in such reality a notion, idea, or conclusion, which we arrive at by means of our logical understanding, then, indeed, we could never escape the subtle arguments of the skeptic. All our knowledge of the outward world being, on that principle, supposed to come through subjective and logical processes, we could never find a valid passage from these abstractions into the concrete reality, and must at once renounce all pretensions to philosophize on the question. But in perception, the qualities of matter are seen by us directly and intuitively. The connection between the organism and the mind is of such a nature, that quality, quantity,

* For a more complete account of the Philosophy of Sensation and Perception, see "Hamilton's Reid," Note D*.

and their developments, such as space, time, figure, degree—in a word, all the primary qualities of matter, are perceived by us, not as *inferences* from certain subjective states, but as the real determinations of objects altogether apart from ourselves, and comprehended by a direct intuition.

This state of the intellectual consciousness, accordingly, should now lead us to a corresponding state of the emotional. As there is a faculty which brings us into direct contact with *things*, as outward objects, so there must be a form of emotion, which has its origin entirely in the perception of such objects; in other words, there must be a practical energy corresponding to this perceptive intelligence. Now, precisely of this nature are those which we term the *animal passions*. The lower animals possess the faculties of sensation and perception in an equally high, and often in a much higher degree, than ourselves; and as we found in instinct the state of emotive consciousness answering to the former, so now we recognize, in the passions to which the animal tribes are subject, the emotive consciousness answering to the latter. Mankind show these passions as distinctly developed as do the lower animals themselves. The emotions which arise on the mere perception of certain objects, such as those which relate to sensual enjoyment, or those referring to the preservation of animal life, are identical in the man and in the brute; they present in either case a development of the *emotive*, collateral with the *intellectual* consciousness, in its combined sensational and perceptive stages.

Having thus rapidly explained the twofold process of sensation and perception, with the allied emotional feelings, we come next to the third step in the development of the human mind, and that is, the logical consciousness, usually comprehended under the term *understanding*. Perception, as we just saw, designates the direct and immediate cognizance of an objective reality—of *a thing*. As such, it of course im-

plies that we possess some kind of comprehension of the primary qualities of all bodies—that we grasp intuitively the main attributes of the material world. In this case, however, our cognizance of these attributes is spontaneous, unreflective, and confused; we comprehend the object presented to us simply *as a whole*, but we do not analyze it: that is, we do not separate its attributes from its essence, and contemplate them apart, numbering up the qualities it exhibits, and making them into abstract ideas. In fact, perception, in the same manner as sensation, simply implies *the consciousness of the moment;* it does not involve the existence of a fixed notion, idea, conception, or of any thing, in brief, out of which a body of experience can be formed, or definite knowledge be constructed. The mere perception, for example, of a house, a stone, or a tree, would only imply the momentary consciousness we should experience, in knowing intuitively the presence of such a concrete object apart from ourselves—it would by no means imply the abstract idea which those words now designate, and in which sense alone they may be regarded as forming some of the elements of our accumulated experience.

The logical consciousness, then, or, as we have before termed it, the understanding, performs a most weighty part in the development of the human mind; for it is this which gives us clear and reflective conceptions of things, which enables us to generalize the particular objects around us, in a word, which performs the threefold process of simple apprehension, judgment, and reasoning.

It may be as well, in explaining this stage of our consciousness, to take a brief inventory of the different subordinate mental processes which it involves, and in which its activity consists. First of all, the momentary state of consciousness experienced in the perception of an object, must be *retained*, so that we may compare it with any others which

may subsequently arise,—this thread of connection running through the different points of our consciousness, and uniting them in one indissoluble chain, is *memory*. If we retain the perceptive consciousness of any given moment, so as to contemplate it afterwards by itself, we usually term the process *conception*. If the process be carried out to any extent, so as to include and interweave other elements, then we term it *imagination*. Again, when we *compare* our conceptions, and classify them for convenience, according to any given points of resemblance they possess in common, we perform the double process, first of abstraction, and then of generalization. To these might be added, as more purely logical processes, definition, division, judgment, and, lastly, reasoning, both in the deductive and the inductive form.

The understanding, then, in these its various developments, evidently performs the chief office in the whole course of our *every day life*. It has to do entirely with the *attributes* of things, separating, scrutinizing, classifying them, and adapting them, by the aid of judgment and reasoning, to all the purposes of human existence. This cognizance of attributes is the main thing in every object of a practical nature. The builder, *e. g.*, cares nothing about the organic structure or essential nature of the materials he employs: he has simply to do with their *qualities*, whether they be hard or soft, flexible or inflexible, durable or perishable, &c. The chemist, again, classifies his drugs according to their *medical* influence on the human system, or some other principle equally objective. The naturalist classifies plants and animals according to certain visible properties. The schoolmaster classifies his boys as good or bad, clever or stupid, obedient or disobedient. In a word, the great business of human life, practically speaking, is to find out the different properties of things aright, and then apply them to their proper uses. The perfection of this process is finally seen in the formation and

use of *language*, which turns almost entirely upon the observation of actions, attributes, and relations.

And yet this logical consciousness, although it is the great instrument of practical life, is entirely subjective and formal. The material with which it has to do is wholly given in sensation and perception; all that it furnishes in addition to this are forms of thought, general notions, categories, and internal processes, which have an abstract or logical value, but which, when viewed alone, are absolutely void of all "*content.*" It is thus that the purely logical mind, though displaying great acuteness, yet is ofttimes involved in a mere empty play upon words, forms, and definitions; making endless divisions, and setting up the finest distinctions, while the real matter of truth itself either escapes out of these abstract moulds, or, perchance, was never in them.

Upon the same level with the logical consciousness, intellectually considered, we have on the emotional side of our nature a very important class of *affections*. These include all those emotive states which have their basis in utilitarian considerations. The domestic affections, so far as they are not purely pathological, the patriotic affections, the passion of avarice, and the like, in brief, those emotions generally which depend, not upon the immediate perception of their object, but upon our *relations* in human life—*all* stand upon the same level with the understanding, and are occasioned by conceptions, which the understanding furnishes to us.

Having advanced thus far, the man is now complete for all the practical necessities of his outward life. First, he has *senses*, which place him in immediate connection with the phenomena around him. Next, he has the wonderful power of going forth, as it were, out of himself, and referring his sensations to outward realities — of gazing upon an objective as well as a subjective world. Thirdly, he has

the faculty of separating and individualizing the properties of external things, or classifying these properties for his own use, of forming abstract ideas, and expressing them by articulate sounds or written symbols. Added to this, the practical life has all along kept pace with the intellectual. Instincts, passions, affections, have developed themselves in the heart just in proportion as notions have been formed in the head. Is not this, then, sufficient? Is not the man now complete? Is any thing *more* required to give perfection to his mental constitution? Let us see.

If the apparatus of faculties we have now indicated exhaust the whole of our intellectual and emotive nature, it is easy for us to mark out the farthest limits of human knowledge. The combined process of sensation and perception on this theory afford the entire *matter* of it, while the understanding supplies the form. Human knowledge, therefore, estimated by this standard, must be limited to those provinces in which, the senses having afforded material, the logical faculty throws that material into the form of notions or ideas—ideas which again are made the basis of deductive or inductive reasoning. Now a little consideration soon begins to reveal to us the working of another state of consciousness higher than those we have yet mentioned—one which takes a broader sweep, and seeks to unravel vaster problems. This higher state of consciousness constitutes a kind of *intellectual sensibility*,—an immediate intuition of certain objects, which are in no respect cognizable simply by the senses and the understanding. The faculty of which we now speak, and which may be termed *pure reason* or *intuition*, holds in fact a similar relation to the understanding that perception holds to sensation. As sensation reveals only *subjective* facts, while perception involves a direct intuition of the *objective* world around us; so, with regard to higher truths and laws, the understanding furnishes *merely* the

subjective forms, in which they may be logically stated, while intuition brings us face to face with the actual matter, or reality of truth itself.

We will take, as an example, the perception of *beauty* in nature or art. This perception arises from a direct sensibility of our whole intellectual and emotional nature. No one can pretend that the whole region of the beautiful is one, to which we are introduced simply by logical *reasoning* upon the intimations of the senses. Beyond sensation, and beyond mere understanding, there must be a glimpse of something positive and real, which we designate *beauty*,—something which appeals to, and corresponds with, a higher state of consciousness than any of the foregoing,—something which is allied to a loftier region of truth, and leaves in the soul a longing for the infinite.

As a second example, let us take the perception of moral truth. Some men may reason themselves into the notion, that goodness is identical with utility. But the mass of thinking minds in all countries, the testimony of the common sense of mankind, and the evidence of all human languages (which are exhibitions of man's spontaneous thinking), all assign a separate sphere to moral truth, and appeal to a *moral consciousness*, as the direct foundation of our thoughts and feelings on this subject. The theories of utility on the one hand, and of a distinct conscience on the other, offer a very fair instance of the nature and spirit of the two systems, the one of which breaks off the human consciousness *abruptly* when it has simply attained the logical stage of activity, the other of which carries it up to the elevation of pure reason, or of what might be here termed moral intuition.

Let us take a third instance. The mind, after it has gazed for a while upon the phenomena of the world around, begins to ponder within itself such thoughts as these. What

is this changing scene, which men call nature? What then *is* nature? Of what primary elements do all things consist? What is the power and the wisdom through which their infinite forms of beauty spring forth, live, decay, and then become instinct with a new vitality? In these questions we again discern the activity of a higher state of consciousness than the understanding alone presents. The understanding looking at the objects presented to us, through the agency of perception, abstracts their properties, and classifies them; in a word, it separates things into their genera and species, and there leaves them. But the pure reason, instead of separating the objects of nature, and classifying them into various species, seeks rather to *unite* them, to view them all together, to find the one fundamental essence by which they are upheld; to discover the great presiding principle by which they are maintained in unbroken harmony. The understanding has simply to do with separate objects, viewed in their specific or generic character; the higher reason has to do with them as forming parts of one vast totality, of which it seeks the basis, the origin, and the end. With the phenomena of the human mind it is the same. The understanding merely classifies them; the pure reason inquires into the nature of the principle from which they spring, and views the human mind as a totality, expressing the will and purpose of its great archetype.

These two efforts of the reason to seek the nature and origin, both of the universe and the soul, lead naturally and inevitably to the conception of some common ground, from which they are both derived. The soul is not self-created, but is consciously dependent upon some higher power. There must be a type after which it was formed; a self-existent essence, from which it proceeded; a supreme *mind* which planned and created my mind. So also with regard to nature. If the universe as a whole shows the most perfect

harmony, all the parts thereof symmetrically adapted to each other, all proceeding onwards like a machine infinitely complicate, yet never clashing, in its minutest wheels and movements; there must be some mind vaster than the universe, one which can take it all in at a single glance, one which has planned its harmony, and keeps the whole system from perturbation. In short, if there be *dependent* existence, there must be *absolute* existence; if there be temporal and finite beings, there must be an Eternal and an Infinite *One*. Thus the power of intuition, that highest elevation of the human consciousness, leads us at length into the world of eternal realities. The period of the mind's converse with mere phenomena being past, it rises at length to grasp the mystery of existence, and the problem of destiny.

Putting these illustrations together, we find that there are at least *three* spheres of thought, to which the human consciousness attains, and which all lie beyond the region of mere perception and mere understanding; and these are the Beautiful, the Good, and the True. Although the understanding may cast the material which reason supplies into a logical form; yet the mind's primary and, indeed, its sole access to it is derived from that higher intellectual consciousness, which transcends the limits of sensuous phenomena, and comes into direct contact with these nobler spheres of human thought.

The emotional states which correspond with these different spheres of our intellectual activity, are very clearly defined. The emotion of beauty is well known as the basis of all the incentives and the pleasure which we experience in connection with æsthetical pursuits. The moral emotions, again, form some of the highest enjoyments of human life; they shed a calmness, a satisfaction, and a glow over the soul, that is conscious of its own rectitude; they give at once a zest to our prosperity, and a dignity to the period of human adver-

sity. Lastly, the religious emotions, which spring from our contemplation of the Infinite Being, in the plenitude of his divine attributes, are the most powerful of all the principles to which our nature can appeal. Even when distorted by superstition, they give a force of character which breaks down all minor opposition; but when of a pure and elevated description, and united with a high moral sensibility, they lend to our nature a power, a dignity, and a glory, which shows its alliance with the divinity here, and gives the clearest intimations of its exalted destiny hereafter.

We have now traced the development of the human consciousness up to its greatest elevation, and it now only remains to show the point where the intellectual and emotional elements blend together in their highest unity. We saw, that there was a point of union at the base of the series of developments above described, which we denominated *bare feeling*. The mind's activity, separating itself from that point into its two different phases, the intellectual and the emotional, passes successively through the different stages of consciousness we have indicated, until at length they again unite at the summit of our spiritual nature in one intense focus. This highest synthesis we term *Faith*. It should be remarked, however, that the term faith, as used in ordinary language, is very indefinite. It is often employed, for example, to designate the final conclusion we draw from a train of reasoning; particularly if that reasoning be of a moral and not a demonstrative kind. The sense, however, in which we now employ it is altogether different from this. Faith we regard to be the highest intellectual sensibility. It is not possible to say, whether it resembles most an intellectual or an emotional state of consciousness; the two seem to be perfectly blended in that pure spiritual elevation, where our intellectual gaze upon truth, is not separable from the love and ecstasy we feel in the contemplation of it. "He

that loveth not," says the Apostle John, "knoweth not God;" his consciousness has not reached that high elevation, where knowledge and love are inseparable, and in the light of which alone we can know God aright.

Coleridge has given virtually the same explanation of the nature and essence of faith. "Faith," he says, "consists in the synthesis of the reason and the individual will. By virtue of the latter, therefore, it must be an energy; and, inasmuch as it relates to the whole man, it must be exerted in each and all of his constituents or incidents, faculties and tendencies; it must be a total not a partial, a continuous not a desultory or occasional energy. And by virtue of the former (that is, reason) faith must be a light, a form of knowing, a beholding of truth."

Faith, then, when perfected, is the state of consciousness which links our present to our future life. The denizens of heaven are termed indifferently Cherubim and Seraphim; spirits that are replete with knowledge, or burn with love; and, as we have just seen, it is the cherubic and the seraphic life *united*, which expresses the perfect state of man's consciousness on earth, a state in which we have equally a perception and a love of the beautiful, the good, and the eternally true.

We have now finished our scheme of the human faculties, and must request our readers, ere they proceed, to familiarize their minds as much as possible with the different stages through which the human consciousness ascends to its highest elevation, and the inseparable connection existing between the successive powers of the understanding and emotions of the heart. We would also again remind them that the activity of the *will*, must be regarded as running through all these different phenomena; and that as there is involved in the spontaneous operations of the human mind, all the elements which the consciousness at all contains, it must not be

imagined that these elements have to be reflectively realized before they can contribute their aid to our mental development. It is, in fact, one of the most delicate and yet important of all psychological analyses to show, how the power of the will operates through all the region of man's spontaneous life, and to prove that our activity is equally voluntary and equally moral in its whole aspect, although the understanding may not have brought the principles on which we act into the clear light of reflective truth. Until this is seen and comprehended, the spontaneity of man's intuitional consciousness is apt to be regarded as the result of some divine *necessity*, instead of involving all the elements of voluntary and moral action.

In the mass of mankind, indeed, the elevation of faith is frequently attained without their ever becoming reflectively conscious of any development at all; while the number of those who take a speculative interest in these questions, will, in all probability, be always very inconsiderable.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE LOGICAL AND THE INTUITIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

In the foregoing chapter we have already described to some extent the general distinction which subsists between the *logical* and the *intuitional* faculty. As, however, this subject will be of great importance in the whole of our subsequent investigations, we have thought it necessary to devote a separate chapter to its fuller elucidation.

And we would caution every reader, in the outset, against the supposition that the distinction we are about to develope somewhat at large, is any thing at all novel in the history of mental philosophy. So far from that, it is almost as universal as philosophy itself, lying alike patent both in ancient and modern speculation. Those, it is true, who have adopted extreme sensational principles, who have denied the validity of all truth beyond the limits of our sensuous impressions, and advocated a gross materialistic skepticism, decide naturally enough to *cancel* the distinction of which we now treat. But in cases where such a skepticism *has not been asserted,* and the validity of any kind of truth beyond the direct intimations of sense *has been* at all admitted, the confusion of the logical and the higher intuitional consciousness in man has either resulted from entire ignorance of the real history of philosophy, or from a great de-

ficiency in the power of philosophical thinking. We do not mean, of course, that the same *phraseology* has been always employed to express the different states of consciousness to which we refer; but we mean that the same conceptions on the subject are almost universally to be recognized through the whole region of metaphysical literature by any mind that can look beneath the mere forms of expression to the ideas they were intended to embody. Let us adduce a few out of the numberless examples that might be taken from the different eras of man's history.

In going back to the age of Pythagoras, we find even thus early, a broad distinction drawn between the νοῦς and the φρην; the former of which represented that higher consciousness, by which we are made conversant with axiomatic truth, the latter, that lower state of consciousness by which we reason upon facts already supplied. The Eleatics recognized the same distinction under the terms πιστις and δοξα; the faculty by which we gaze upon "το ὄν" (the eternal and unchangeable essence), being regarded by them as something altogether different from that by which we are brought merely into practical contact with the phenomenal world. In Heraclitus the same two forms of consciousness appear, under the aspect of the *common* and the *individual* reason; the former (ξυνος λογος) being the criterion of abstract truth generally, the latter (ιδια φρονησις) being simply the basis of private, and those, of course, often erroneous opinions.

To quote the philosophy of Plato on this question, must be well-nigh superfluous. The whole of its power, its truthfulness, its sublimity, results from a more than ordinarily full and distinct appreciation of the higher reason (νοῦς, λογος,) as that element in our nature by which we are brought into direct contact with truth, in its purer and diviner forms. The testimony of Aristotle, however, is more important, when we consider that his mind was far more of the logical-

character, and that he is often imagined to stand directly opposed to Plato upon these very points. This latter impression respecting Aristotle, I think, has been proved entirely erroneous. That acute thinker certainly did not fail to see that all reasoning must start from *first principles*, and that the discursive or logical faculty by which we infer one truth from another, is a very different form of intelligence from the *noetic* faculty, by which we have an intuitive perception of the primary elements of which all truth consists.*

In no era of speculation, however, did the distinction in question come out more prominently than in the Alexandrian school. The writings of Plotinus clearly embody the whole controversy on the immediacy of our knowledge, both of the external world, and of the world of spiritual truth. The different states of consciousness to which we attain, according as we are engaged simply with representative conceptions, or with actual realities, form, indeed, no inconsiderable element in all the chief speculations of that extraordinary thinker. And even in the scholastic ages, when the discursive faculty was developed to an unusual degree of prominence, still even then there were not a few who retained a clear conception of those higher processes of mind by which we apprehend *necessary truth*, as that primary material of our knowledge which the understanding afterwards shapes into formal axioms.

The history of modern philosophy is a running comment upon the distinction we are establishing. The "Communes Notiones" of Lord Herbert, in opposition to his "Discursus;" the "Innate Ideas" of Descartes, (very different things from those which Locke undertook to refute,) as opposed to Demonstration; the "Knowledge of the First Degree," as

* For a considerable number of passages illustrating Aristotle's views on this point, see Hamilton's Reid, p. 771, et seq.

placed by Spinoza in opposition to "Knowledge of the Second Degree;" the "Natural Light," and "Instinct" of Leibnitz, as contradistinguished from his logical deductions—to say nothing of the views of the English Platonists, which were as explicit as words can very well make them on the same point,—all these furnish us with a clear testimony from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in favor of a twofold intellectual consciousness in man, the one bearing a logical, the other an intuitional character. Even Locke himself is sometimes betrayed into the same admission; the terms "*common sense*," "*self evidence*," and "*intuition*," as occasionally found in his writings, all betokening in that great thinker the consciousness of a higher faculty than the mere discursive understanding.

To come down to more modern times. Kant, it is needless to say, has founded upon the distinction between the "*Verstand*," and the "*Vernunft*" in its speculative and practical movements, the whole framework of his massive philosophical system; and the German Idealists have never lost sight of it for a moment throughout all their labyrinthine speculations. The present controversy, in fact, between the elder and the younger Hegelians, in reference to the nature of Christianity, all turns upon the relative predominance of the intuitional or logical consciousness in the development of religious truth; while the philosophy of the school of Jacobi offers, perhaps, the most systematic vindication of the intuitional, in opposition to the claims of the logical faculty, which has ever been published to the world.

Amongst our own countrymen, Reid had the clearest possible perception of the difference between the two mental processes we are now designating. "We ascribe to reason," he says, "two offices, or two degrees. The first is to judge of things self-evident—(this is intellect, νοῦς:) the second is to draw conclusions that are *not* self-evident from those that

are—(this is reasoning, *διανοια.*"*) The "*common sense*" —the "*fundamental principles of belief*,"—the "*primary laws of reason*," &c., of the Scottish school, all indicate, indeed, virtually the same great fact.

In the writings of Coleridge we have still further the same two classes of phenomena described, under the title of the *understanding* and the *reason*. There are some who with singular ignorance imagine that Coleridge in using these words was attempting to naturalize a modern German discovery. The fact is, that he was only adding the testimony of his own inward experience to that of almost every true philosopher in the world who had preceded him.

Lastly, in France, the principle of Eclecticism, as being an appeal to the common and spontaneous thinking of mankind; and the whole of the historical school, building as it does upon the idea of *humanity* in opposition to the *individual judgment*, are both different phases, in which these two classes of thinkers contemplate the same great fundamental fact—namely, that above the region of logical inference there is a higher faculty, a higher appeal, a higher elevation of the consciousness, by which we are brought into immediate contact with the fixed truths that lie at the basis of all our reasonings. The last instance I have happened to see of the distinct recognition of this faculty, is in the sermon of the Bishop of Oxford, preached before the British Association in June, 1847. "The spirit of man," he remarked, "has gifts greater than the highest powers of the understanding. There is in him, dimmed somewhat though it be, the Divine power of *intuition*. This is that gift of genius which sees the hidden unity after the discovery of which all true philosophy is striving. For there is behind all that which we term nature, one true severe unity, and to contemplate this amidst

* "Intellectual Powers." Essay vi. chap. ii.

external diversity, is the especial gift of this higher reason." These are only *a few* of the testimonies, which the history of philosophy presents. Were it of any service to do so, we might bring forward an almost innumerable multitude of witnesses, who in various forms, and from different points of view, have come to this same virtual conclusion—namely, that there is one state of our intellectual consciousness by virtue of which we define terms, form propositions, construct reasonings, and perform the whole office that we usually attribute to a mind that acts *logically;* but that there is also another state of our intellectual consciousness, in which the *material* of truth comes to us as though by a rational instinct —a mental sensibility—an intuitive power—a "communis sensus," traceable over the whole surface of civilized humanity. These two classes of phenomena, therefore, which we find to be almost universally acknowledged by past thinkers, we have denominated the logical and the intuitional consciousness; and it is the object of the present chapter to develope as clearly as possible the real distinction between them. We shall attempt to do this by a connected series of observations.

I. The knowledge we obtain by the logical consciousness is *representative* and *indirect;* while that which we obtain by the intuitional consciousness is *presentative* and *immediate.*

The main points in the question of the mediacy and immediacy of our knowledge have been gradually brought out with the utmost distinctness in the controversy, which has existed, on the nature of *perception.* It was long taken for granted, that our knowledge of the external world was obtained through the medium of inward *conceptions,* or representative *ideas.* The objects around us, it was said, affect our sensuous organs; these affections are transmitted to the brain; and the impression made upon the brain is in some mysterious manner communicated to the mind, which gains

in this way an "*idea*" of the objects in question. Hume argued with irresistible force, that on these principles we could have no certain knowledge of the external world at all; for as our consciousness has here to do only with the idea or mental conception, it is impossible ever to conclude *scientifically* that the inward representation is in any way a truthful reflex of the outward reality, or that there is any reality at all, to be reflected. Kant attempted to save the main pillars of human belief by pointing out a twofold element existing in perception,—by showing, namely, that our ideas of external things are compounded first of a direct intuition, which furnishes the *matter* of which they consist, and then of a constructive faculty which furnishes the *form*.

Fichte, however, neglecting what was true and exposing what was weak in the Kantian philosophy, completed the subjective theory. Admit that our knowledge of all things around us consists in *ideas*, and we can never, he argued, get out of the subjective circle which our theory draws around us. The soul here becomes as it were an intellectual eye placed in the centre of the consciousness, and occupies itself solely with the phenomena which pass across it. Whether these phenomena be significant of any external reality or not we cannot tell; for whatever faculty we may suppose capable of assuring us of it, still this very faculty merely indicates a subjective process, which can no better take us out of ourselves than could the previous conceptions.

The only scientific solution of these difficulties, is substantially that which was first proposed by Reid, and has since been more fully developed by Sir W. Hamilton. It begins by denying the primary position of the ideal system (a position to which almost universal assent had been given from the age of Aristotle); namely, that we have within us, separately and distinctly, any such things as the ideas, conceptions, or representations of external objects at all. In

opposition to this, it affirms that our knowledge of the external world is direct, presentative, and (in the lower use of that word) intuitional; that the subject stands face to face with the object; that the objective reality, therefore, is *not* mirrored to us through any kind of internal representative process; but is apprehended *at once* by the direct intercourse which the mind enjoys with surrounding nature, by the aid of its material organism. Thus the *scientific basis* of our knowledge, even of the external world itself, has demanded an adequate appreciation of the difference between that which comes to our minds by direct intuition, or presentation, and that which comes only mediately by an intervening conception or idea.*

I have been somewhat more explicit than might appear needful upon this point, because the perception of the external world through the senses, is perfectly analogous to that higher intuition, by which we are brought into contact with what we may term super-sensual truth. And not only this, but the skepticism which results from denying the immediacy of our perceptive knowledge in regard to the outward world applies with exactly the same force against all spiritual truth, when the higher intuitional consciousness is lost sight of, or rejected.

Of mere phenomena we can gain a very good knowledge by an intermediate or logical process. We can have their different attributes presented to us as *abstract ideas;* we can put those attributes together one by one, and thus form a conception of the whole thing *as a phenomenon;* but this cannot be done with regard to any elementary and essential existence. Of *substance,* for example, we can gain no conception by a logical definition: the attempt to do so has, in fact, always ended in the denial of substance altogether,

* See Hamilton's Reid. Notes and Dissertations.

considered as an objective reality; it becomes in this way simply the projected shadow of our own faculties. The only refuge against this logical skepticism, which has uniformly attached itself to a sensational philosophy,* is in the immediacy of our higher knowledge—in the fact that we see and feel the existence of a substantial reality around us, without the aid of any logical idea or definition, by which it can be represented or conveyed.

It may aid the comprehension of this truth if we append an example. Suppose a friend wishes to describe to us a house, or a mountain, which we have never seen. He can do so by taking its attributes (size, shape, color, &c.,) and putting them together, so as to form a picture or representation of it. This process, of course, is a purely *logical* one; it is the combination of a given number of abstract ideas, and gives rise simply to a *representative* knowledge of the thing in question. On the other hand, if our friend wished to convey to us the knowledge of a primary element; whether of one which we must know by our lower or sensuous intuition, as a *taste* or a feeling, or of one which we must know by our higher or rational intuition, as substance, power, beauty, infinity, &c., here he would find all his logical or representative powers at fault. Unless we ourselves *have the intuition presented to us immediately*, we can never comprehend it; for it can never be made representative, never be known through a logical definition.

The case is precisely the same with regard to the existence of an absolute Being—of a God. If any one imagine that he can *ever* attain the full conception of the Deity by a process of logical definition or reasoning, he will be utterly disappointed of his hope. The primary conception of the

* See Mill's Analysis, in which this theory of "Substance" is fully developed. Vol. i. chap. xi.

infinite, the absolute, the self-existent, is altogether *undefinable*,—and consequently those minds which have proceeded logically in their inquiry on this subject, to the denial of all other evidence, have always concluded that we have no such conception at all,—that the infinite is a purely negative idea,—that it results simply from the addition of an indefinite number of finites. And yet to the intuitional consciousness there is no idea more positive, more sure, more *necessary* than this. Reason up to a God, and the best you can do is to hypostatize and deify the final product of your own faculties; but admit the reality of an intellectual intuition, (as the mass of mankind virtually do,) and the absolute stands before us in all its living reality.

As additional illustration, take the cases of æsthetical and moral truth. Of the former we will select *music* as an example. Could any reasoning, any number of ideas, definitions, or conceptions, convey to the mind of a man the beauty of harmony? The perception of beauty in music (which is by no means a sensuous but a highly intellectual process) depends upon a *direct sensibility*. Our appreciation of it we know is *immediate*,—presentative; no logic could ever convey it, none could reason us out of it. In this point of view, accordingly, music is purely *intuitional;* reduce it to a science of periods and intervals, and it becomes *logical*, —requiring in this form simply an ordinary power of the understanding to comprehend it.

With moral truth the case is analogous. You may attempt to reduce morals to a logical calculation, by introducing the theory of utility; but you can never in this way account for half the phenomena of the case, and get but a sadly distorted ethical system in the end. Moral truth, like all other *primary elements* of our knowledge, is *presentative;* we know it intuitively, and what many philosophers have denominated the *moral sense* is only another expression for

the fact, that good and evil are not logical elements, but a part of that fundamental truth which is known to us at once by our higher consciousness.

In all these instances we see that the primary elements of knowledge, the fundamental realities of the *true*, the *beautiful*, and the *good*, all alike come to us *at once* by virtue of an intellectual sensibility, which apprehends them spontaneously and intuitively, just as in our perceptive consciousness we apprehend the outward reality of things around us. Without this perceptive consciousness we could never attain the very first elements of physical truth; inasmuch as we could never comprehend what is given us immediately in perception, by any description, definition, or idea. Yet once given *as elements*, we can reason upon them logically, and thus create what is properly termed physical *science*. In like manner, also, we comprehend the elements of all higher truth, whether in theology, æsthetics, or morals; but, having thus got access to them by our intuitional consciousness, then at length we can reason upon them by the understanding, until we reduce them to logical or scientific terms.*

II. The knowledge we obtain by the logical consciousness is *reflective;* that which we obtain by the intuitional consciousness is *spontaneous*. The spontaneous and reflective phases of our mental operations have been brought forward with much clearness in several of the more modern systems of philosophy; and the importance of distinguishing them is now pretty generally acknowledged. We term knowledge spontaneous, when we acquire it by the natural activity of our faculties, without taking any account, or being at all

* It would take too much space to indicate here all the respective characteristics of presentative and representative truth. The reader is again referred to Sir W. Hamilton's edition of Reid, Note B, for a fuller elucidation of it.

conscious of what that activity *really* is. It is evidently quite possible for a man to live and think and act throughout his whole career on earth, without once consciously turning the eye of the mind inwards, without once arresting his trains of thought, or ever becoming distinctly cognizant of a single subjective process. Reflection is the *bending back* of the mind upon itself; so that we may *render account* of the knowledge we have been acquiring spontaneously, and gain a clear idea of its development and its validity. Such is the broad distinction which has been drawn between our spontaneous and reflective life *generally;* and there is evidently a sense in which all the faculties, even the logical consciousness itself, may be regarded as having a spontaneous movement such as we have described—a sense in which we cast our knowledge spontaneously and unreflectively into a logical mould.

There is, however, a somewhat more precise and scientific acceptation in which these two terms are frequently employed. We term a man's knowledge *spontaneous* when it comes naturally to him without his knowing how—flowing in upon his mind, as it were, without effort, and by virtue of its peculiar constitution. On the other hand, we term a man's knowledge *reflective* when it is purely *scientific*—that is to say, when it is gained by a distinct attention to rules or principles, and developed consecutively *from* them. Thus an uninstructed man with a natural genius for *music*, knows it spontaneously; if he learn it by scientific rules, then he knows it also *reflectively*. Again, a man who has naturally a deep sense of religious obligation gives us an example of the spontaneous development of the religious life; if he study *theology* consecutively, then his religious life becomes not only spontaneous, but also reflective.

Now it will be found, upon consideration, that the phenomena of spontaneity and reflectivity, as thus explained, are

closely connected with the intuitional and logical consciousness; that they depend entirely upon our knowledge existing respectively in the presentative, or the representative form.

The knowledge that comes to us intuitionally or presentatively, must necessarily be *spontaneous*. Just as our perception of the external world is a spontaneous process whenever the object without comes into direct contact with the subject within; in like manner also does our intuitional consciousness bring us *spontaneously* into sympathy with the elements of higher and spiritual truth. On this ground it is, that there has so frequently been a tendency to describe the intuitional faculty by the name of an intellectual, a moral, or a religious *sensibility;* conveying in every case the notion that there is an *immediate* contact effected between the elemental truth in question and the intellectual organ, similar to the contact which takes place between the sensitive apparatus and the outward object, in the process of perception. On the other hand, the knowledge which comes to us logically or representatively, must evidently be *reflective, i. e.*, acquired by the conscious spirit of truth *upon scientific principles*. Science is created, when we adopt certain *terms* to signify elementary ideas—when we give clear definitions of what those terms are to include—when we form propositions so as to embody the knowledge we have acquired—and develope the subject connectedly into a clear and logical system. This whole process of a scientific construction, then, we repeat, is entirely of the reflective character. So long as we are merely gazing upon the elementary ideas which each science involves, we are acting alike spontaneously and intuitionally; but the moment we begin to reduce this knowledge to definitions, and to mould it into a scientific system, that moment we pass from the spontaneous and intuitional to the reflective and logical phase of the question.

Moreover, the reflective knowledge resulting from this is

clearly *representative;* for instead of the concrete truth being presented at once to the mind's eye, it is represented to us by means of verbal definitions and statements; we gaze, in fact, upon the mediating conceptions or ideas, not upon the original or essential *reality*.

III. The knowledge we obtain by the intuitional consciousness is *material*, that which we gain by the logical consciousness is *formal*.

This is one of the most important points to be noticed in the whole distinction we are now establishing. The division of human knowledge into the *matter* and the *form*, is one which has stood its ground in the history of philosophy through a vast number of centuries, and has generally indicated an advanced state of metaphysical thinking, in proportion as it has become thoroughly realized, and incorporated into the science of the age. In this particular aspect of the distinction in question, as in those we have already considered, the best illustration of the subject we can present, is the analogous case of our sense-perceptions, since the co-existence of *matter* and *form*, in all knowledge depending upon the experience of the senses, is precisely similar to their co-existence in knowledge of a higher and more general description.

It is frequently supposed, that the *notions* we possess of external objects around us, are simply sensuous impressions —that the logical form of those objects is conveyed by the senses to the brain, and then so enstamped on the mind as to leave upon it an *idea*, which can be afterwards recalled by the aid of memory, and otherwise made the ground of human experience. Now, this popular view of perception is the result of a miserably defective analysis of the whole process. Perception, viewed alone, indicates simply the *momentary consciousness* of an external reality standing before us face to face; but it gives us no *notion* which we can define and express by a term. To do this is the office of the *understand-*

ing—the logical or constructive faculty, which seizes upon the concrete material that is given immediately in perception, moulds it into an idea, expresses this idea by a word or a sign, and then lays it up in the memory, as it were a hewn stone, all shaped and prepared for use, whenever it may be required, either for ordinary life, or for constructing a scientific system. Thus every notion we have of an external object—as a house, a tree, or a flower—is compounded of two elements, a material and a formal. The matter is furnished by the direct sensational intuition of a concrete reality; and this is perception: the form is furnished by the logical faculty, which, separating the attributes of the object as given in perception from the essence, constructs a notion or idea, which can be clearly defined and employed as a fixed term in the region of our reflective knowledge. Thus perception, indeed, is the *basis* of our experience; for without it no objective material could be presented to us; but the understanding is the faculty which gives to our perceptions a definite form, and enables us to build up our knowledge into a complete body of experimental truth.

If the reader has now succeeded in gaining a clear conception of the twofold element of all *experimental* truth, namely, the material and the formal, he will have no difficulty in comprehending this same distinction in connection with truth of a higher order. Just as in all our conceptions of material things there is the *matter* which is contributed by one faculty, and the form by another, so in all the higher sciences, whether they be mathematical, moral, theological, ontological, or æsthetic, we depend entirely upon the intuitional consciousness to give us the concrete basis of them, and upon the logical consciousness to give us the scientific form.

The mathematical sciences, for example, have as their essential foundation the pure conceptions of space and num-

ber; or, if they be of the mechanical order, the conceptions of power and motion. Moral science, again, is based upon the fundamental notions of good and evil; æsthetical science upon that of beauty; theological science upon the conception of the absolute—of God. Now, these primary elements of all the sciences can never be communicated and never *learned* exegetically. Unless we have a direct consciousness of them, they must ever remain a deep mystery to us—just as no description could ever give to a blind man the notion of color, or to a man who has no organ of taste the idea of bitter or salt. We do not deny but that means may be employed to *awaken* the consciousness to these ideas, but still they can never be known by definition—never communicated by words to any man who has not already felt them in his own inward experience. Here, then, we have the actual material of all scientific truth, and that material, it is evident, must be *presentative*, coming to us by the immediate operation of our intuitional consciousness.

Let us next turn to the consideration of the *form* which scientific truth necessarily assumes. The bare intuition of the elements of our knowledge does not by any means constitute *science*. To do this, we must shape our direct intuitions into *notions*, which may represent them *definitively*; these notions must be expressed by signs; the facts connected with them by propositions; and thus we must embody the whole subject in a united chain of logical deductions.

The point, however, to which we would here draw especial attention, is this—that the logical statement of truth places that truth before us not *really*, but *representatively*. When we study the science of astronomy by means of our mathematical definitions and diagrams, we are not gazing upon *the actual concrete truth*, but are viewing it formally, as *represented* by words and symbols. When we construct

a regular system of ethics, we are not viewing moral relations *directly*, since they can only be viewed directly in *actual life;* but we are producing a logical representation of them. When we develope the laws of harmony, we are not then directly conscious of that harmony, as we are when it is actually produced; but we are describing it indirectly, and gazing upon the *representation* which our logical definitions place before us. This, then, we may term the *form* into which the understanding throws the material, which intuition alone can originally impart to us. Thus we may regard pure intuition as one extreme, and bare formal logic as the opposite. Science only exists when the two are united; its essential nature consisting in the reduction of intuitional truth into a logical, secondary, or representational form.*

IV. The logical consciousness tends to *separation* (analysis), the intuitional consciousness tends to *unity* (synthesis).

Kant long ago pointed out the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments, and saw that the whole validity of metaphysical science rested upon the answer we return to the question—How are synthetic judgments *à priori* possible? He saw that if we were confined merely to analytic judgments, *i. e.*, if all we had to do was to declare a kind of *numerical relationship* between a given amount of subjects and predicates, (as we do in ordinary logical propositions,) there could be no room for extending human knowledge beyond our formal and empirical ideas.

Now the real distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments is this—that the former are judgments which arise from the activity of the logical consciousness, the latter from that of the intuitional consciousness. Thus, when I say, "every triangle has three sides," I simply analyze the term

* See for further illustrations of this, Schleiermacher's Entwarf eines Systemes der Sittenlehre. Introduction.

triangle, and utter the logical proposition, that the triangle necessarily belongs to that class of figures which is bounded by three sides, although the word itself only *expresses* the condition of its having three angles. Again, when I say, "the whole is greater than a part," here we have another analytic judgment *à priori*, *i. e.*, there is a *numerical* relation declared between the subject and the predicate, as in all *purely logical* propositions. On the other hand, when I say every quality implies a substance, I declare no numerical relation between the subject and predicate—I utter no truth which can be perceived or appreciated by the logical faculty; I form, on the contrary, a *synthetic* judgment, which is grounded solely upon my intuitional consciousness.

Now the use of analysis is to *separate*, and the constant effort, therefore, of the analytic faculty (which is, in fact, identical with the logical) is to *distinguish*, and to *divide* our knowledge into the greatest possible number of definite parts. The more perfect and acute our logical genius becomes, the more attributes we are able to enumerate as belonging to all our ideas, and the finer the distinctions we draw,—just so much the greater is the number of parts into which our knowledge is intersected. On the contrary, the constant effort of the intuitional consciousness is to grasp the highest unity. Instead of gazing upon the forms, it endeavors to seize upon the matter of our knowledge. Logical distinctions, abstract ideas, phenomenal attributes, are all lost sight of—it stops not to take any cognizance of them, but strives at once to find what great reality there is which lies unchanged and unchangeable beneath all the phenomena around us. Logic, for example, will enumerate the different kinds of beauty—intuition gazes upon the essence of beauty itself. Logic will give us a classification of virtues—intuition alone perceives the absolute good, the eternal right. Logic will classify all external objects under a given number of cate-

gories—intuition grasps the substance which lies alike at the basis of all. These two faculties form the poles of all our knowledge; the one gives us distinctions, the other shows the identity of things apparently diverse; the one tends to a perpetual separation into parts, the other to a perpetual unity, in a perfect whole. Between these two oppositions vibrate all the points of scientific truth.

V. The logical consciousness is *individual;* the intuitional consciousness is *generic.*

We come here to another of the more important and fruitful points in the distinction we are now drawing between the two great forms of intellection. The contest has been long going forward, how far we must appeal to the individual reason as the basis and test of truth, or how far we must make our appeal to the common consent of mankind. On the one hand, it has been argued that the individual reason must be the final appeal; for in whatever way truth come to us, still our own individual faculties *must*, as far as we are concerned, be the judge of its evidences, and the interpreter of its meaning. It matters not what amount of truth really exist *objectively; to us* it is nothing, until it is grasped *subjectively* by the understanding. Even if we appeal to common consent, or to any other authority, still that appeal itself must be an *individual* judgment.

On the other hand, it has been argued forcibly enough that the individual reason is altogether untrustworthy, for it *may*, and often *does*, give its assent to the very grossest errors and delusions. Beside this, it is urged, the individual reason is a nonentity—a mere abstraction; for every man is but a link in the chain of humanity; and his individualism, if it can be termed so, is the result of the general consciousness of mankind acting upon his original constitution. Hence it is concluded that the individual reason is altogether

untrustworthy, but that the reason of humanity, the common consent of the race, is our true test, our last appeal.*

Now, both these theories have truth on their side, although they appear to stand in direct opposition to each other. The ground of their antagonism arises from omitting to consider what it is within us which is individual in its character, and what that is generic, or belonging to the race of mankind at large. We all feel conscious that *there are* certain points of truth respecting which we can appeal to our own individual understanding with unerring certainty. No amount of contradiction, for example, no weight of opposing testimony from others, could ever shake our belief in the definitions and deductions of mathematical science, or the conclusions of a purely logical syllogism. On the other hand, we are equally conscious, upon due consideration, that there are truths, respecting which we *distrust* our individual judgment, and gain certainty in admitting them, only from the concurring testimony of other minds. (Of this nature, for example, are the main points of moral and religious truth.) Hence it appears evident that there is within us both an individual and a generic element, and that answering to them there are truths for which we may appeal to the individual reason, and truths for which we must appeal to the testimony of mankind as a whole.

The ground of this twofold element in our constitution, and the reconciliation of the respective claims of the individual reason and the *common sense* of humanity, is easily explained, when we take into account the distinction which we have been developing between the logical and the intuitional consciousness. It will be readily seen, upon a little consideration, that the logical consciousness is stamped with a perfect individualism, the intuitional consciousness with

* Vide Pierre Leroux De L'Humanité.

an equally universal or generic character. The logical consciousness, as we have shown, is *formal;* and it is in those branches of knowledge which turn upon formal definitions, distinctions, and deductions (such as mathematics or logic), that we feel the most perfect trust in the certainty of our individual conclusions. The understanding, in fact, is framed so as to act on certain principles, which we may term *laws of thought;* and whatever knowledge depends upon the simple application of these laws, is as certain and infallible as human nature can possibly make it. The laws of thought (or, in other words, the logical understanding,) present a *fixed element* in every individual man; so that the testimony of one sound mind in this respect is as good as a thousand. Were not the forms of reasoning, indeed, alike for all, there could be no longer any certain communication between man and man.

The intuitional consciousness, on the other hand, is not formal, but material; and in gazing upon the actual elements of knowledge, our perception of their truth in all its fulness just depends upon the extent to which the intuitive faculty is awakened and matured. The *science* of music, for example, is absolutely the same for every human *understanding;* but the real perception of harmony, upon which that science depends as its material basis, turns entirely upon the extent to which the direct sensibility for harmony is awakened. And so it is with regard to every other subject which involves a direct element of supersensual truth. The intensity with which we realize it depends upon the state of our *intuitional consciousness*, so far at least as the subject in question is concerned. Here there are no fixed and uniform laws of intellection, as in the logical region, but a progressive intensity from the weakest up to the strongest power of spiritual vision, or of intellectual sensibility.

Such then being the case, our appeal for the truthfulness

of our direct mental intuitions cannot be to the individual, but to mankind at large. We know not how far our own individual sensibility may be awakened; or how far, if awakened, it may be imperfectly purified, so as to see through a distorted medium. To take the same instance as above, our confidence in the real excellence and beauty of a given combination of musical harmony will depend not *only* upon its pleasing ourselves, (for there may be conflicting associations which may cause it to produce a given effect *in us* which it cannot in others,) but upon its appealing to the universal sensibility of mankind. This is the real test of its purity and its beauty. And so likewise with every other point of knowledge which depends upon our direct intuitional consciousness. Intuition being a thing not formal, but material—not uniform, but varying—not subject to rigid laws, but exposed to all the variations of association and temperament; being in fact the function of humanity, and not of the individual mind,—the only means of getting at the essential elements of primary intuitional truth is to grasp that which rests on the common sympathies of mankind in its historical development, after all individual impurities and idiosyncracies have been entirely stripped away. This brings us to the last remark.—

VI. That the logical consciousness is fixed, through all ages; the intuitional consciousness *progressive*.

This is in fact a direct result from the preceding considerations. If there be in man an element of individualism,* that is to say, if there are *fixed* laws of thought, which are virtually the same in every man, then it is evident that these

* The reader must be careful not to take the word individualism here as implying a peculiarity in the individual; but as denoting a *principle* which is perfect in the individual, and does not depend on the development of the race.

will be fixed laws also for every *age*. If, on the other hand, there is a "*sensus communis*," which can be realized by gleaning out from the mass of conflicting opinions the deepest experiences of mankind; and if this common power of intuition be really the function of humanity *as a whole;* then it is manifest, that as mankind on the whole advances, and marches forward to its destination, this generic truth-organ must expand proportionally.

Now if the *logical consciousness* be considered in relation to history, it will be found to have ever retained the same form, and to have evinced about an equal intensity in every period. The laws and rules of formal logic are exactly the same *now* that that they were in the time of Aristotle; and the application of them to any class of facts which may be known to each age, is made in every case in the same manner, and much about to the same degree. Here no *progress* is observable; the diversity of logical power in different ages is no greater than what may be found among individuals in the same era. But if we turn from the logical to the intuitional consciousness, here, instead of a fixed result, we find a perpetual variation, and, regarding mankind *as a whole*, a constant progression. In one country, for instance, we find the musical sensibility greatly in advance; in another, the perception of beauty through the eye (as was the case among the Greeks) has arrived at a high degree of perfection; in other instances, there is a peculiar awakening of the moral or of the religious consciousness; in a word, whenever we find our direct intuitions coming into operation, *there* we find a kind of *vital development*, not confined to individual minds, but flowing generally through the consciousness of the mass.

In this intuitional life, moreover, *progress* is as essential as in every other kind of vitality. Here stagnation indicates disease and decay; for so sure as man was created for an

ultimate end—so sure as he was intended to arrive at ever higher attainments in every thing great and good—must his pathway be perpetually upwards, and the whole sensibilities of his nature come more and more into harmony with the Divine nature—with the *life of God*.

In realizing the distinction we have now portrayed between the two great modes of man's intellectual activity, we must caution our readers not to confound the products of the intuitional consciousness with the fundamental *forms* of thought, such as are usually described in a table of the categories. The product of intuition is never an abstract, formal, and empty notion; it is precisely the reverse—namely, a direct perception of some actual concrete reality. By means of the logical or analytic faculty, we never see things in their *organic unity;* we merely view their separate parts abstractedly considered, and seek to discover the formal consistency which runs through them. By intuition, on the other hand, we view truth *as a whole*, without taking any account of its parts—without noticing the forms or categories under which it can be represented to us—without asking after the logical consistency of the entire phenomenon.

An objection, perhaps, here arises, that if intuition be the direct presentation of truth in its entire concrete reality, it must always be *infallible* in its results. This objection leads us to expound the *connection* of the intuitional and logical forms of intelligence somewhat more closely. Were our intuitional nature *absolutely perfect*, then, indeed, its results would be infallible. If we imagine our minds to be perfectly harmonized, morally, intellectually, religiously, with all truth—if we can imagine them without any discord of the interior being, to stand in the midst of a universe upon which God has impressed his own divine ideas, and receive the truth as it presents itself to the consciousness, just as the retina receives the images of external things—then, indeed,

we should comprehend all things *as they are;* and the mere manifestation would be its own evidence of their reality. A mind so harmonized with nature and with God, would perceive at one glance the *processes* and *ends* of all things; just as Goethe, without the labor of any inductive reasoning, saw the truth of the metamorphosis of plants; just as *genius* in the philosopher grasps the hidden analogies, and gives the initiative idea upon which future inductions must be grounded; just as a high spiritual sensibility feels the reality of moral and religious truth, long ere it is verified or logically expounded.

This harmony of our nature, however, has been disturbed; and with it the power of intuition is at once diminished and rendered uncertain. The reality of things, instead of picturing itself, as it were, upon the calm surface of the soul, casts its reflection upon a mind disturbed by evil, by passion, by prejudice, by a thousand other influences which distort the image, and tend to efface it altogether. Hence, in proportion to the inward disorganization of man's moral and intellectual being as a whole, will be the deficiency and divergency of his intuitive perceptions.

Conscious of this defect, the *logical* faculty comes to our aid. Knowing, as we do too well, that the intuitions we obtain of truth in its concrete unity are not perfect, we seek to restore and verify that truth by *analysis, i. e.*, by separating it into its parts, viewing each of those parts abstractedly by itself, and finding out their relative consistency so as to put them together by a logical and reflective construction, into a systematic and formal *whole.* Hence the impulse to know the truth *aright* gives perpetual vitality and activity to the law by which our spontaneous or intuitional life passes over into the logical and reflective. Logical reasoning is the result of human imperfection struggling after intellectual restoration. In the defect of gazing upon truth as it is, by

virtue of the interior harmony of our whole being with God, we seek a substitute by applying the aids of analysis, of formal reasoning, of verification,—of the entire logical reconstruction of our whole knowledge.

Thus the very rise of logical analysis implies the existence of intuition; for were there no truth *dimly* perceived, there would be no impulse to restore and define it; and consequently, valuable as logical processes may be, they cannot fill the place or perform the office of broad and vivid perceptions. Hence our constant effort should be, if we would extend our knowledge of truth, to bring our nature more and more into moral harmony with it; and in case of distrusting the clearness of our own mental eye, we should appeal to the experience of others, so as to correct the imperfections or distortions of our *individual* intuitions by the conceptions of their perchance more highly purified minds. More especially should we look to those minds whose inward harmony with truth has become perfected, and whose power of spiritual vision we account as being an inspiration from the Almighty.

The connection of these principles, however, with the phenomena of genius, of inspiration, of religious development, and of the appeal to the common consciousness of mankind, we must reserve until they are taken up in their due order. We might also have compared the views here given with the most recent and profound investigations into the philosophy of induction, especially with those maintained by Professor Whewell; but this we shall likewise reserve for another place.

We have simply developed what appear to be the *principal points* of distinction between our logical and intuitional faculties. What we have said, we have said very briefly, and much remains behind, that in a fuller description of the subject might well find a place. As the distinction in question is

one of vital importance, not only in comprehending the philosophy of religion, but almost all the intellectual phenomena of human existence likewise, we must entreat our readers to make themselves thoroughly masters of the subject, by testing it, not only through the medium of the illustrations here offered, but through the personal effort of their own minds. We are anxious above all things that nothing here should be taken *on trust*, but that every one at all interested in the conclusions arrived at would sift them, until he has either discovered their error, or finds that his convictions are drawn along in the sequence.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE PECULIAR ESSENCE OF RELIGION.

We have now laid what may be termed the philosophical groundwork of the subject before us; that is to say, we have given a brief sketch of the powers and faculties of the human mind, and attempted next to unfold and establish the distinction between those two great forms of our intellectual being, upon which the whole discussion respecting the subjective nature of religion must chiefly turn. With the points already gained, we can now enter with some advantage upon the fundamental questions involved in the *Philosophy of Religion*, properly so called; and, as in every other subject, it is the office of a true analysis to separate what is essential to it from what is merely accidental or adscititious, so here, likewise, our primary object must be to discover what is *the peculiar essence of Religion*.

Let it be distinctly understood in the outset, that we are speaking of religion now as a fact or phenomenon in human nature. There is a very common, but a very loose employment of the term religion, in which it is made to designate the outward and formal principles of a community, quite independently of the region of human experience; as when we speak of the Protestant religion, the religion of Mohammed, the religions of India, and the like. The mixing up of

these two significations in a philosophical treatise, cannot fail to give rise to unnumbered misunderstandings; and we emphatically repeat, therefore, that in our present use of the term, we are not intending to express any system of truth or form of doctrine whatever; but simply an inward fact of the human consciousness—a fact, too, the essential nature of which it is of the utmost importance for us to discover.

Universal experience assures us that mankind is the subject of an inward *religious life*—or of a peculiar state of consciousness so termed—which impresses itself through an infinite variety of acts and forms upon the outward surface of human society. The temples of Heathenism, the mosque of the Mohammedan, the superstitions of the ignorant, the heavenly aspirations of the noble-minded, all alike point out a consciousness of certain spiritual facts and duties, which never seem to be entirely obliterated from the human mind. A little consideration, moreover, shows us, that there is something *peculiar* in the state of consciousness designated by the term *religion*, which is not contained in any other form of inward sentiment or activity. Though highly elevating, it differs from all ordinary enthusiasm; though intensely stimulating, it cannot be identified with any of the common impulses of our personal or social life; though directing and urging often to the highest moral action, yet it stands apparently quite apart from, and sometimes even in contrast with, the moral feelings; in short, it has an element of its own, which throws a distinct hue over every thing that springs from it as the source. Such, then, being the testimony of daily experience, the inquiry naturally follows, what is the peculiar essence of religion, regarded as a universal phenomenon of human nature? What is the precise state of consciousness which we term, in contradistinction from every other, *the religious consciousness?*

The first point to be settled in such an inquiry is this—

whether the religious element in man is something communicated from an extrinsic source, or whether it be an original element of his nature drawn forth and modified, as the case may be, by outward influences. Those who are accustomed only to view mental phenomena in their *actual*, without ascending to their *primitive* state, and who, consequently, have the notion of religion only in connection with a distinctive system of doctrine or duty, are apt to look upon the religious element in man as being altogether adventitious. A little consideration, we apprehend, is sufficient to show the fallacy of this notion. The *universality* of the tendency to fear, or to worship the spiritual, *in some form*, is in itself a strong proof of religion (*essentially* speaking) being an original constituent of the human soul. But, apart from this, admitting that the religious life is first *awakened* by means of external agencies, admitting that it manifests itself *specifically*, as the result of our contact either with direct teaching, or with the religious life as existing in other minds; yet still there must be some inward faculty, or sensibility, to which these outward influences appeal, and without which all direct teaching, and all the power of example, would be utterly inefficient. As we could never be *taught* morality without a moral sense; as all moral education, on the contrary, really consists in awakening and directing what is already potentially within us; so also we could never be taught *religion* by any external appliances, unless there were some inward susceptibility, which may indeed be aroused or regulated by discipline, but which exists as a primary element in the original scheme of our spiritual nature.*

* This has been so often and so clearly insisted upon by almost all, who have investigated the subject with any degree of philosophical acumen, that we do not think it necessary to take up any further space in the illustration of it. Nitzsch, in his "Christliche Dogmatik," expresses himself as follows:—"Obwohl gesagt werden darf, dass der

If, then, we are to regard the religious life as springing from an original element in the nature of man, it is important next to inquire, to what part of our constitution this original element belongs? If the reader will turn back to our table of the human faculties, as given in the first chapter, it will be seen, that there are just *three* great and fundamental forms of man's inward consciousness, expressed by the terms *knowing, willing, feeling*. These forms, although mingling up in every possible manner with each other, yet are found by analysis to be essentially distinct. The mind is itself a power, or pure spontaneity; and this spontaneous activity, (in which its personality consists,) mingles up, as the case may be, with *two* other elements—that of intellection on the one hand, of emotion on the other. Every state of consciousness consists in some way of these elements; and every *simple* or *elementary* state must have *one* of the three, as the category to which it essentially belongs. If, then, we could determine to which of these generic forms of consciousness religion, subjectively speaking, belongs, we should have made some definite progress towards the solution of the problem before us.

Let us inquire, then, first—*Whether Religion be essentially any form of knowing?*

The earlier and Scholastic Theologians for the most part answered this question in the affirmative. At any rate, as they had no idea of analyzing the phenomenon into its essence, and its incidental forms—as they regarded religion more in the light of something adventitious, derived from revelation, or instruction, or some such objective source; they

Mensch durch Wechselwirkung des Aüsseren, und Innern,—als durch Erfahrung, Offenbarung, Lehre, und Ueberlieferung zur Gotteserkenntniss erzogen werde, so wäre doch nichts zu erziehen, und zu bilden vorhanden, wenn der Erziehung nicht ein Ursprüngliches Gottesbewusstseyn als wirksame Anlage vorausginge."

naturally placed it amongst those operations of the mind, which have reference to the perception or appreciation of truth. The same view, with certain modifications, has been taken by most of the Rationalistic Theologians. Though they are far from referring religion to any divine or supernatural origin, yet they commonly place its essence in the power we have of *knowing* God, and comprehending his attributes. Their object being to reduce every thing to rational or logical terms, the end they have in view would manifestly remain unaccomplished, so long as the primary essence of religion itself was supposed to lie *without* the region of the intellect.

Some of these theologians, however, regarding both feeling and perception (Gefühl and Vorstellung) as a *lower kind* of knowledge, admit that there may be a lower kind of religion springing from them. Hegel, for example, argues, that although there may be a dim and indistinct sense of Deity in *feeling*, and although there may be a somewhat fuller conception of the Divine Being by a direct perception or mental representation (Vorstellung), yet these spontaneous conceptions can neither be fixed and definite, nor ever be legitimately verified. Such a result, he continues, can only be obtained by logical *thinking;* for thinking alone can bring the contents of the human consciousness into the clear light of certitude and verified truth.*

Against this reasoning, however, we may urge,—that we do not affirm thinking, and that, too, of a strictly logical kind, to be unnecessary or useless in *perfecting* our religious nature; nay, that so far from this, every faculty we possess may contribute to it. Each power or susceptibility of the human mind, we know, is rendered more complete by the co-operation and support of all the rest, without at the same

* See Hegel's Religions-Philosophie. Vol. I.

time giving up its own essential character, or losing that central point of difference which separates it from all other mental phenomena. Admitting, therefore, that the *co-operation* of the logical understanding is necessary to the full development of the inward religious life, yet there may be some other state of consciousness in which it *essentially* consists, and which we ought to understand aright in order to find the starting point of our whole theory. If religion can exist *at all* without the co-operation of logical thinking, properly so called, as Hegel in a subordinate sense admits, then its essential germ must be looked for in some *other* region of our mental constitution.

That this conclusion is coincident with the actual facts of the case, is rendered practically evident by the consideration, that the measure of our knowledge, even on Divine things, can never be taken as the measure of our religion. Did religion consist essentially in knowledge, then it must exactly follow the developments of knowledge in the human mind; so far at least as our knowledge is conversant with religious objects. This is, however, by no means the case. Nothing is more evident than the fact, that there may be many gradations of religious intensity in men, whose amount of knowledge is as nearly as possible *identical;* and on the other hand, that there may be about an equal manifestation of religious intensity where the degrees of knowledge are immensely at variance. All this tends to show us, that although the co-operation of knowledge may be necessary to the perfection of our religious life, yea, and in a subordinate sense, to its very existence, yet there is some phenomenon, lying *without* the region of what we may term intellectual activity, in which religion is really cradled, and the measure of which shall exactly determine the measure of our piety towards God.*

* See Schleiermacher's Dogmatik. Chap. I., sec. 1.

Inferring, then, from the foregoing considerations, that religion cannot be a form of pure intellection, we proceed to inquire next—*Whether it can consist essentially in action?* The superficial and degrading idea that religion consists in the mere external performance of certain duties, can hardly merit the serious attention of any reflective mind. No outward actions can possibly answer to the most feeble notion we possess of real piety; for we invariably look beneath the outward phenomena to the spiritual life within, before we pronounce upon the religious attributes of any agent whatever. And if we take the term action in an inward and spiritual sense, yet it only presents to us the aspect of a blind and indeterminate *energy*, until it is regulated and directed by some specific purpose or feeling. Action, then, *as action*, cannot be religious; it only becomes so when we show that it springs from a *religious* impulse or emotion. The measure of our mere activity, whether external or internal, can never be the measure of our religious intensity; it is activity *in some particular form* which alone can determine it. The essence of religion, accordingly, cannot consist in the activity itself, for that is indifferent to the question; but in the peculiar element, whatever that may be, which influences our activity so as to direct it towards the Infinite and the Divine. Now it is an almost universally acknowledged axiom in psychology, that the *principles of action* (those which give aim and direction to all our energies) are the feelings or emotions, which on that account have been frequently called the *active*, in opposition to the intellectual powers. We may conclude, therefore, even by the rules of the disjunctive syllogism, that the essence of religion belongs to that class of phenomena which we term *emotional*.

This conclusion, we find upon due consideration, is borne out by the very same kind of reasoning by which the other cases were rejected. Neither intelligence nor activity,

viewed alone, can become the measure of our religion; but there are certain forms of emotion which can readily become so. If, for example, we could find some determined form of emotion, which causes all our thoughts, desires, actions—in a word, our whole interior and exterior life to tend upwards towards God as their great centre and source, we should have little hesitation in saying that such an emotion would precisely measure the true religious intensity of our being, and little hesitation in fixing *there* the central point—the veritable essence of religion itself.

The most able and earnest thinkers of modern times, who have attempted to solve the problem now before us, have in fact almost universally considered the essential element of religion to consist in some of the infinite developments of feeling. We shall adduce *two* of them as examples. Jacobi, who was one of the first to see the full worth and signification of *feeling* in the domain of philosophy, defines religion to be "A faith, resting upon feeling, in the reality of the supersensual and ideal." The other author to whom we refer is Schleiermacher, than whom no man has ever pursued with greater penetration of mind and earnestness of spirit the pathway of a Divine philosophy; and he places the essence of religion in *the absolute feeling of dependence*, and of a conscious relationship to God, originating immediately from it.* All our former considerations, accordingly, as well as the great weight of authority amongst the best analysts, lead us to place the primitive and essential element of religion in the region of human emotion.

The term emotion is altogether generic. If religion be essentially speaking an emotion of the mind, then it must be an emotion possessing some peculiar and distinctive character. In order to arrive at a definition of religion, we must

* Dogmatik. Chap. I., sec. 4.

specify the differentia as well as the genus; that is, we must not only identify it with the phenomena called emotional, but we must point out the specific nature of the emotion in question.

The analysis of this point will oblige us to penetrate somewhat deeper than we have yet done into the nature of the human consciousness.

By all who have made the fundamental questions of mental philosophy a matter of close investigation, it is well understood that in every possible state of the human consciousness there are two elements necessarily involved—the subject and the object. Be the form of consciousness what it may, yet there must ever be *self*, the personal percipient, on the one side, and some object or other to which the mind's attention is directed standing in opposition. Even should our attention be directed to purely internal and mental phenomena, still, even in these cases, there is a plain distinction between mind as subject and mind as object—between the inward subject perceiving and the inward object perceived.

This law is not confined to any particular class of mental phenomena; it is equally valid in every possible case. Every form of *intelligence* manifestly supposes it; for there must always be the knowing and the known, the thinking and the thought. In fact, every form of intelligence involves the attempt to bring the nature and attributes of some object home to the subject—*self*, and unite them in the harmony of a direct consciousness. On the contrary, every form of action implies the effort to impress our own subjective energy upon some outward object. Intelligence seeks to bring every thing to the centre of self, and place it before the eye of the percipient—action seeks to diffuse the energy of the subject over the whole or some portion of the objective world.

The same law which we see to pervade the regions of

thought and action, pervades equally the region of emotion. Every emotion presupposes a mind aroused or excited, and an object arousing and exciting it; and on examining attentively the phenomena of the case, we find that there is a highly *fluctuating proportion* between the energy of the subject on the one hand, and the influence of the object on the other. Wherever the energy of the subject predominates, the emotion is one of *freedom*—wherever the influence of the object predominates, the emotion is one of passive susceptibility; or what is the same thing, of *dependence* upon something beyond ourselves. In the impetuous passions, in the energetic emotions, in those strong affections which concentrate the power of the human will upon the attainment of some desired end, we have examples of emotion in which the sense of freedom is uppermost; while in the relation of a child to its parent—of a subject to a sovereign—and in other states of feeling springing from similar circumstances, we see examples of emotion where the sense of dependence is predominant.

In the ordinary flow of human life, our emotions are almost always various combinations of these two generic feelings. The subject. and object, the sense of freedom and dependence, vary and interchange with each other. There is an action and a reaction ever going on, in which sometimes the subjective side appears to be in the ascendency, sometimes the objective; while frequently there is well-nigh a balance of the two influences, which leaves the mind in a state of calm repose between them.

There are, however, two particular relations of the subject and the object in the region of emotion, to which especial attention needs now to be directed; and these occur when the influence of the one over the other approaches to *an extreme degree* in its own direction. These relations can only be rightly understood under the notion of

polarity. In proportion as the subjective pole comes into greater ascendency, the objective pole diminishes in the intensity of its influence, and *vice versâ*, so that as one approaches the limit of infinity the other approaches that of zero. There are periods of human emotion when the will —the sense of freedom — seems almost *omnipotent;* when human nature becomes actively and determinately selfish in all its aims, and imperious in all its demands; when man would, if he were able, make himself *a God*, and render the personal subject absolute over every thing in the universe beside. This *entire* self-deification, however, is a moral paradox, which man has too much conscious weakness to imagine, except under a momentary state of infatuated delusion. In other words, the absolute sense of freedom is to a human being impossible; God alone can possess it; for in him only the absoluteness of the subject can become consciously realized.

With regard to the sense of *dependence*, however, the case is far otherwise. Although man, while in the midst of finite objects, always feels himself to a certain extent independent and free; yet in the presence of that which is self-existent, infinite and eternal, he may feel the sense of freedom utterly pass away and become absorbed in the sense of absolute dependence. Accordingly, while an absolute sense of freedom is to a finite creature *impossible*, yet an absolute sense of dependence is strictly in accordance with man's being and relations in the universe. Let the relation of subject and object in the economy of our emotions become such that the whole independent energy of the former merges into the latter as its prime cause and present sustainer; let the subject become as nothing—not, indeed, from its intrinsic insignificance or incapacity of moral action, but by virtue of the infinity of the object to which it stands consciously opposed;

and the feeling of dependence *must* become *absolute;* for all finite power is as *nothing* in relation to the Infinite.

The absolute feeling of dependence, then, arises, according to the foregoing remarks, in connection with that state of the emotional consciousness in which our subjective self stands opposed to an *absolute object;* and what object is or can be absolute but the Infinite Being himself—God—the self-existent, self-dependent, and eternal? Such a feeling of dependence, therefore, as we have described, *involves* in it virtually the sense of Deity; it expresses a moment of the consciousness in which we have transcended all finite existences, and have reached the conception of what is absolute —a moment in which we have come to the farthermost verge of secondary causes, and stand in view of the great first cause, the eternal *power*—a moment in which we think not of the subordinate ends of human life, but place ourselves in relation to that great end for which all things were made, and towards which all things are *tending*.

These considerations give us a safe clue to the solution of the problem we have now before us,—to determine, namely, the precise mode of feeling in which religion essentially consists. Let us recapitulate the steps and draw the conclusions. Every state of consciousness involves in it the opposition of subject and object: in the emotions, the predominance of the subject gives a sense of freedom, the predominance of the object a sense of dependence. On the side of freedom, our feelings cannot reach the infinite, for the subject, *self*, is always circumscribed. On the side of dependence, however, we *can* reach the sphere of infinity; for the moment our consciousness attains that elevation in which our finite self becomes nothing in the presence of infinity, eternity, and omnipotence, the accompanying state of emotion is one which involves an absolute object; *and such an emotion must be equivalent to a sense of Deity.* Hence we infer that

the essential germ of the religious life is concentrated in the absolute feeling of dependence—a feeling which implies nothing abject, but, on the contrary, a high and hallowed sense of our being inseparably related to Deity—of our being *parts* of his great plan—of our being held up in his vast embrace—of our being formed for some specific destiny, which, even amidst the subordinate and finite pursuits of life, must ever be kept in view as the goal of our whole being.

In describing this absolute sense of dependence, as containing the essential element of religion, we do not mean that this *alone*, without the co-operation of the other faculties, would give rise to the religious *life*. To do this there must be intelligence—there must be activity—there must be, in short, all the other elements of human nature. But what we mean is this—that the sense of dependence *accompanying* all our mental operations gives them the peculiar hue of piety. Thinking alone cannot be religious; but thinking, accompanied by a sense of dependence on the infinite reason is *religious thought*. Activity alone cannot be religious; but activity carried on under a sense of absolute dependence upon infinite *power* is religious action. In a word, it is this peculiar mode of feeling pervading all our powers, faculties, and inward phenomena, which gives them a religious character; so that we may correctly say that the *essence* of religion lies exactly here.

The absolute sense of dependence, unaccompanied by the other elements of human nature, would give the *analogue* to religion as seen in man, but not, humanly speaking, religion itself. The faithful dog often exhibits perfect dependence on his master; and we may say by way of comparison, that man is the dog's deity—that his perfect confidence in man is the dog's religion; but here the feeling of dependence cannot be religion in the human sense; because it is not developed in a human mind. The child exhibits perfect

dependence on the parent, and that is the infant's *religion*—a quality which was even denominated "pietas" by the Romans. But it is when the earthly parent is known not to be *absolute*, and the heavenly parent alone occupies this place in the opening consciousness of the child, that the piety of parental confidence becomes piety properly so called—piety towards God.

The ignorant heathen makes his idol the absolute power; and trusts implicitly to it. Such an absolute dependence upon a fetish or an image, as far as it is a genuine experience, is *essentially* religion; but it is religion in a degraded form; it is the holy confidence which we have to render to God *alone*, concentrated upon some insentient, perhaps upon some disgusting object. All this tends to show us, that while the religious capacity, or the feeling of absolute dependence, belongs to man *as man*—while we may say that it is a universal and necessary element in our nature—yet religion as unfolded into a life, a life of elevated piety, belongs only to a more mature condition of human development. There may be an absolute sense of dependence experienced in connection with a very low condition of the intellectual and moral nature; which is only saying that there may be a very imperfect and degraded form of religion, as well as a high and holy one. The purity, the excellence, the real elevation of the religious life, will depend mainly upon the intuition we have of the absolute object on which we depend, and towards which all our thoughts, energies, and hopes are directed.

This leads us to the last point we have to elucidate in determining the nature of religion. We have already shown that it belongs to the class of mental phenomena termed emotional—and that the specific nature of the emotion is one involving a sense of absolute dependence. We have now to determine the grounds on which the absolute sense of dependence should give rise, as we find that it does, to so many dif-

ferent modes of religious development in man, and to show what are the conditions under which it produces a pure and elevated form of the religious life.

To throw some light upon these points, let it be observed, that the sense of dependence may attach itself to the objects discernible by *any one* of the different forms of the human consciousness; and according to what these objects are, will give rise to a very different development of the religious life. In fact it seems probable that we may find in this principle a clue to the interpretation of the different *kinds* of religion which have severally appeared in the history of mankind.

The lowest stage of the human consciousness is that which is conversant simply with sensations and instincts. The only religious feeling which could attach itself to such a sphere of mental activity, is a dim and undefined sense of dependence, such as we see in the confidence and repose of the infant upon parental care and tenderness. Such an instinctive confidence we may regard as the first bud of feeling, out of which the religious emotions gradually germinate. We should, indeed, hardly call it *religious*, but simply say that such a feeling in the babe is the analogue of religious trust in the man.

The *perceptive* consciousness, to which we next advance, is that in which the mind entirely absorbs itself in the contemplation of outward objects. It may be regarded, therefore, as a state of mind in which external nature exerts the predominant influence over the whole man. An absolute feeling of *dependence upon nature* will clearly give rise to a form of religious consciousness in which man will idolize visible objects or phenomena, and concentrate upon them his *highest* confidence. In the most degraded condition of human life, the mind, not elevated enough to feel the beauty of nature at large, merely grovels amidst individual objects; and as it has no sense of any thing higher than these, the

trust natural to man in all states of his being clings to such objects as though they had a mysterious power over his whole destiny. Such is *fetishism*, the very lowest form of religious feeling that develops itself in actual worship.

As the mind rises above the influence of individual objects, and converses more widely with nature, then the elements themselves—the principles out of which all things are formed,—are regarded as the primitive and absolute powers. Hence the worship of the earth, of the winds, of fire, of light—of all the more sublime objects which strike the senses. And as the reflective faculties become sufficiently awakened to imagine the existence of *invisible powers*, which act in and through the elements of nature, gradually the mountains and plains, the ocean, and the heavens, become peopled with a whole hierarchy of deities, upon which all the arrangements of human life are supposed dependent. Of this kind is the religion which springs from the predominance of the perceptive faculty; and history itself shows us, that so long as man converses mainly with nature, such results as I have described are uniformly produced.

We come next to the *logical* consciousness; and have now to inquire what development of the religious life will answer to the predominance of this form of our mental activity. The peculiarity of the logical consciousness, as we have abundantly shown, is this—that the knowledge with which it is conversant is mediate and representative, instead of being, like that of perception and intuition, immediate and presentative; that it is *abstract*, while the latter is *concrete*.

Accordingly, the religion which answers to this state of the intellectual life will be *the religion which attaches itself to abstract ideas*. Let us explain ourselves. The external objects of perception, when they come under the analysis of the logical faculty, are transformed from concrete realities

into aggregations of qualities. The attributes of nature thus become abstracted from the visible order of things around us; the phenomena of the universe are then attributed to these metaphysical conceptions; and the life of man is at length regarded as being *dependent* upon qualities which, having been first abstracted, are finally personified and worshipped.

In the same manner are *human attributes* also seized upon, by a similar process of logical analysis, and the great and bolder qualities of mankind referred to some impersonation from whom they were imagined to emanate. Thus, in the Greek and Roman mythology, we find the constant deification of wisdom, power, love, peace, war, and other similar abstract ideas. In fact, let the development of the human consciousness be in such a stage, that the mere dependence upon external objects perceived or supposed has passed by, and the clear realization of abstract ideas or attributes has succeeded; let these attributes become, as it were, the moving powers both of nature and man; let them finally become personified by the activity of an ever fertile imagination; and you will have man's sense of dependence —man's religious nature—throwing itself, as it were, upon these abstractions, and worshipping them as its gods.

It is not, however, in the regions of polytheism alone, that the religion of the logical consciousness has the opportunity of developing itself. It will sometimes gain considerable predominance even in the purest system of monotheistic worship. Christianity itself is too often reduced to a system built upon mere logical terms; and many a man in whom the higher intuitions of the New Testament have never been awakened, yet confidently frames a deity for himself out of the abstract ideas of omnipotence, omniscience, justice, mercy, &c., and bids the wants of his religious nature to satisfy themselves at the shrine of this inward idol. To

many the term *idol* may sound harsh as applied to such conceptions; but in fact, the result of a merely logical process can be nothing else. The men who deal so freely with mere abstract ideas, and have no higher intuitions of the Infinite and the Divine, do, in truth, but create an imaginary idol for themselves to worship. Just according to the temperament of their own minds, they put together a greater or less proportion, and a superior or inferior degree of benevolence, of justice, of sternness, of omniscience, &c., and out of these logical compounds they *create* the conception of a being, which subsequently gives a coloring to their whole religious life. No two men, in fact, who depend upon such logical processes for their conceptions of the Divinity, worship the same God; and all of them, alas! worship a very different one from the true and living God, who reveals himself *not* to the understanding, but only to the inward *faith* of the human soul. We repeat, therefore, that to compound a deity out of logical abstractions, and then to set up this mental representation as the supreme object of religious worship, is *idolatry* of a most subtle and often pernicious kind. What matter whether we make a representation of wood or stone, or a representation of empty abstractions, the one is no more *the living God* than the other; and the idolatry of the former kind is hardly less deadening to the pure religious sensibilities of our nature than is that of the latter.

That the asserted impossibility of attaining the real conception of the Divine Being by logical processes is correct, not only follows from the analysis we have before given of the nature of this faculty, but is proved experimentally by the professed efforts which have been made formally to deduce the Infinite by such means. From Spinoza downwards the attempt to ground a natural theology upon logic alone has ended in a purely pantheistic or an equally empty result. Nor is that result unnatural. Carry out the principle of

constructing your notions of Deity upon abstract ideas, and God becomes synonymous with the *absolute idea*, or perhaps with the logical process of developing it, as we see in certain of the prevailing pantheisms of modern Germany. Hegelianism, in fact, is the uttermost effort of pure logic in search of the Absolute and Divine. It has shown *marvellously* what logic *can* do; but it has also shown what it *cannot;* and from the culminating point to which that philosophy brought the rationalistic tendency, the unsatisfied spirit of humanity turns sympathetically to a faith that is higher than knowledge; yea, and which also lies at the very basis of it all.

We enter now, lastly, the sphere of the intuitional consciousness, and wait to see what are the objects, around which the religious emotions can here gather. Intuition, as we saw in a previous chapter, gives us the *material* which the logical faculty works and moulds into a reflective or scientific *form*. Its province is to bring us into *immediate* contact with concrete truth, to strip away mere minor determinations, and point us to the *unity* of all things in their real essential nature. The great spheres to which our intuitions are directed, are those of the *beautiful*, the *good*, and the *true*, —and corresponding to these are three classes of emotions, the æsthetical, the moral, and those hitherto unnamed heavings of the spirit, when it contemplates the awful majesty and immensity of *Being*—pure eternal *Being*.

In this sphere of thought and feeling we see at once, that the sense of dependence will find more congenial objects around which it can cling. The beautiful, the good, the true, are indeed but three different pathways, by which we strive to rise upwards to the Infinite. Never does the actual beauty we behold reach the pure ideal for which we long, never do the virtues and perfections of earth realize the moral purity which we conceive as residing in the centre and source of all goodness; and, in our loftier moments of contemplation,

we seem well nigh to stand upon the verge of infinity, and gaze, though not fixedly, upon the *Eternal True*—upon *Being*, in its essence, its unity, its self-existent eternity. In presence of such objects, the feeling of dependence is drawn forth into holy and tender resignation. To give ourselves up to the love of the beautiful, the good, the true—to feel ourselves shielded, protected, inspired, and encompassed by their eternal laws, this is the *first* development of religion in its purer and nobler form.

Within the region of ordinary intuition, however, the religious feelings have scope for considerable variations; each sphere of emotion giving rise to a different development of them. In some cases the æsthetic emotions may predominate, and the resulting effect upon the religious affections will be—a tendency towards the worship of the beautiful. The predominant feature of this state may be termed spiritual *sentimentalism*—a state in which the religious affections, losing sight to a great extent of moral ideas and purposes, cluster around certain ideal creations, which fancy paints to the mind in forms of perfect symmetry, and hues of unutterable beauty.

In other instances there may be a predominance of the *moral element*. When this is the case, the religious affections will tend to inspire a dependence upon moral law and order in the universe. Such a religion will impart firmness to the character, and activity in the prosecution of practical duty; but will often betray a great want of tenderness in feeling, and of deep sympathy at once with the beautiful and the divine. Finally, when the intuitions of pure being, and the corresponding affections predominate over the sense of ideal beauty and moral law, the religious life within will tend towards Pantheism, the peculiarity of which is to sink all moral relations in the infinite *reality*—to make "*το ὄν*" absorb "*το αγαθον*," in its vast abyss.

If the reader will now refer for a moment to the scheme we have given of the human faculties in the first chapter, he will see that there is an elevated state of the consciousness in which the whole energy of our intuitional faculty is concentrated. There is a moment of man's inward experience, in which the higher intuitions seem to merge into a state of deep emotion, and in which, on the other hand, the higher emotions merge into a state of deep and immediate gazing upon truth; in a word, there is a state in which all our intuitions, and the emotions corresponding, blend in one common unity, and realize the phenomenon of that pure and holy *faith* which seems to be the immediate contact of the finite with the infinite—the calm repose of the soul of man upon the eternal God. It is not infinite being, infinite beauty, or infinite goodness, upon which we here gaze—it is upon *all* concentrated in the *personality* of one divine mind—a conception which brings together as into a focus the whole energy of the intellect, the emotions, and the will.

Here, then, let the feeling of absolute dependence come into full activity, and there is at length clear before us the *Absolute Being*, on whom we may depend. Religion, linked together with such a faith, becomes the very highest and noblest form of human emotion, an emotion which gathers up all the powers and all the activities of the human mind, and directs them in singleness of purpose towards infinite ends, infinite duties, and an infinite existence. Here the religious affections find their native home, leaving all the other stages far behind them. Here the absolute sense of dependence discovers *that* after which it had long been yearning. Here the whole man is led to yield himself to the omnipotent will and eternal service of that Being from whose creative energy all things proceeded, and who is, and must ever be, the one infinite end into which all finite ends eternally flow.

We have thus developed two conclusions, each of them highly important towards the full comprehension of the nature of religion. We have shown *first*, that the germ of religion lies in *feeling*,—and that the absolute feeling of dependence. And then, *secondly*, we have shown that the absolute feeling of dependence, seeking its object through all the different stages of the human consciousness, is driven *onwards* from one resting place to another, until, in the region of faith, it finds the absolute Being, of which it had ever dreamed, to whose existence it had ever tacitly pointed, and united to which, it gives the highest and the purest intensity to all the activities of the human mind. Respecting the agencies by which the religious consciousness may be brought into this its highest state of development, we have as yet said *nothing*. The discussion of this question, however, gives us the transition point from the subject of religion *generally* to that of Christianity, as the agent of its purest and divinest form.

POSTSCRIPT TO CHAPTER III.

The history of the development of the idea of religion is very interesting and instructive. With regard to the origin of the word, it appears to me somewhat difficult to decide whether we are to derive it from religere or religare, the former giving the idea of pondering, the latter the idea of obligation. Massurius Sabinus derives it from relinquere—meaning separation from the world.

The earlier theologians attached rather a technical and dogmatical meaning to the term religion than a philosophical one; expressing by it the mode in which we are enabled rightly to know and to worship God. The writers who first broke in upon the old stereotyped notions of dogmatic Theology, and sought new definitions of them, were the earlier Rationalists. The definitions of these writers hold up, for the most part, the *intellectual* side of the idea of religion

to the almost entire exclusion of its more essential elements. Thus *Ammon* defines it,—"Conscientiæ vinculum, quo cogitando, volendo et agendo numini nos obstrictos sentimus, *i. e.*, consensus animi cum voluntate numinis recte cognitâ." The definition of Wegscheider is very similar. Bretschneider terms religion, "Glaube an die Realität der Idee der Gottheit, mit angemessener Gesinning und Handlungsweise."

More strictly philosophical definitions than these, however, are to be met with principally in the German writers, from the time of Spinoza downwards. Spinoza, indeed, by affirming religion to be the conscious absorption of the phenomenal in the absolute by pure intellectual *love*, gave a new turn to philosophical speculation on this subject, the fruits of which appear very strikingly in later times.

Kant, from the stoical bent of his mind, gave to the idea of religion a purely *moral* intensity; with him all religion becomes obedience to the absolute moral law, as a Divine ordination. Jacobi, on the other hand, who introduced the element of *feeling* into the intellectual philosophy of Germany, was probably the first to realize philosophically that idea of religion, which refers its essential element to this part of our constitution. Of the philosophy of Jacobi that of Fries was an immediate offset; and De Wette, who represents the theological side of this philosophy, has viewed religion as that deep consciousness of the Eternal in every thing around us, which manifests itself in the form of inspiration, devotion, rapture, &c., and which alone is able to unravel all the contradictions and perplexities of human life. In the same spirit as this we have seen Schleiermacher, penetrating still deeper into the essence of religion, and realizing its nature, philosophically speaking, as we think, more accurately than any one had done before him.

Leaving the Gefühl-Philosophie, and following the purely speculative side of the question, we find the idea of religion passing through a great variety of logical transformations; until it becomes sublimated into a sheer nonentity. Fichte, following in the footsteps of Kant, refers religion to a faith in the moral order of the universe. Schelling took up the thread of speculation where Spinoza had left it, and elaborated that idea of religion which makes it spring from an immediate intuition of the union of the finite with

the infinite—God becoming self-conscious in human history. This led the way for the speculations of Hegel, who supposes religion, in its proper intensity, to consist in the process by which we think ourselves up, logically and consecutively, into the region of the universal. Thus religion and philosophy become *one*. The Hegelian school has developed this fundamental idea into many definitions. Marheineke gives it as the "Aufnahme der menschlichen Natur in die göttliche;" or, "Eingerücktsein des menschlichen Denkens Gottes, in das göttliche Denken Gottes."

The Pantheistic side of this view has been still further drawn out by Strauss, who entirely denies the existence of a Divine consciousness separate from the human; while Feuerbach completes the theory by proving that, this being the case, man in imagining a Deity is only deifying his own nature, and in worshipping a Deity is only worshipping humanity. To him, accordingly, religion is "Das Verhalten des Menschen zu sich selbst als zu einem anderen Wesen;" while the whole practical bent of religion is "Die liebevolle Hingabe an die Menschheit;" an instructive example truly of the consequence of resigning one's self to mere logical reasoning, regardless of our direct intuition of Divine *realities*.

For a more complete view of different definitions, see "Huttru Redivivus," Locus i.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

In the foregoing chapter we have shown that religion, essentially considered, is a form of human feeling which has for its great characteristic the consciousness of *absolute dependence*. We have seen, moreover, that the religious life assumes many different forms, taking for the most part its peculiar hue from the nature of the object towards which this feeling of dependence is attracted. In proportion, therefore, as the object becomes purer, higher, and holier, it naturally indicates a corresponding elevation in the whole character of the religious life itself.

Now, the existence and the prevalence of different kinds of religion are great historical facts in human experience. In looking over the surface of the world from the very earliest periods of time, we find that certain great phases of religious sentiment and emotion have spread widely amongst different nations, and developed themselves in the growth of those nations from age to age. The religions of Greece and Rome, for example, had each their own peculiar elements of thought and feeling; the religions of India, Persia, and Thibet have, in like manner, maintained for almost unnumbered centuries, the most distinctive modes of conceiving and expressing the relation between the finite mind and the infinite. The Jew, the Mohammedan, and the Christian, all, too,

have cherished *their* several conceptions respecting the one living and true God, and the *dependence* of humanity upon his infinite will. In each case, there is a peculiar development of the religious consciousness, considered as a universal element in man's spiritual nature; in each case a peculiar mode, in which the sense of dependence in the human mind attaches itself to the invisible world.

In passing, therefore, as we essay to do in the present chapter, from the subject of religion generally, to the consideration of religion in some distinctive form, as a fact in human history, it will be necessary for us to investigate the subjective process by which a religion, historically speaking, becomes formed and established in the consciousness of different portions of mankind. In this way we shall be better enabled to comprehend what is the *specific* element existing in any one of the great historical forms of religious life, apart from the essence of religion itself; and as Christianity is one of those forms, we may be led by this procedure to perceive what it is that distinguishes *it* specifically as a phase of man's inward self-consciousness, from all the rest.

Let it be observed, first of all, that religion resides *essentially* in the *emotive* part of our nature; and on this very ground is calculated to produce a feeling of sympathy between minds similarly affected. Men are not attracted by any secret sympathy towards each other from observing a common participation in the laws of reasoning; but let there be any common emotion impelling them inwardly, and we immediately find an invisible tie which binds them together, as though by some strong magnetic influence.

If this be true of all the emotions, especially is it true of those which are developed upon the sphere of the intuitional consciousness; which are more powerfully attractive, just in proportion as they are more elevated and refined in character than all the rest. No one can long resist that gush of *sym-*

pathy, which arises in the mind of all good men when they perceive in a fellow-creature the same glow of pure enjoyment which they have themselves experienced in the deep and holy intuition of the true, the beautiful, and the good.

Moreover, when to these elevated emotions the *religious* sentiment is added; when the feeling of an unqualified dependence on God joins its peculiar influence, and infuses into all the other emotions a sense of resignation to the will and purposes of an infinite being; then, indeed, the bands of secret sympathy become almost incalculably strong and attractive. Of all the inward influences, in fact, which we can conceive to operate upon the human spirit, there are none which we can imagine more adapted to draw men to each other, and bring them into close and almost mysterious communion, than is a high organic development of the *religious life*.

Now it is evident, that amongst any people living under the same heavens, with the same scenes of nature around them, with the same habits of life and modes of education, with the same national traditions, and perchance the same privileges arising from the special arrangements and gifts of Providence, there will be a *predisposition* in the minds of all towards the inward development of some particular *phase* of religious sentiment. This tendency must inevitably operate to produce sympathy amongst those who are most powerfully affected by it; and this sympathy, striving to find an outward expression, will soon give rise to a visible fellowship. Hence the generic and attractive character which the religious emotions so peculiarly possess, and possess perhaps above every other, forms the primary basis of all religious fellowship amongst mankind.

Such a fellowship, again, when once created, *reacts* in its turn upon the religious intuitions and sentiments; for the close and confidential intercourse it supposes amongst

different minds, tends gradually to *equalize* them, to reduce the great spiritual idea under which they have been moulded into fellowship, to a uniform expression, to bring the religious consciousness of all up to the same level, and thus to give unity to its outward development. Here, accordingly, we see the subjective part of the process, by which a determinate religion raises itself in the history of human experience. The outward or providential circumstances of a people give some peculiar *bias* to the religious faculty; the emotions to which that faculty gives rise, attract men together by an inward sympathy, so as to originate religious fellowships; the intercourse which fellowships produce, gradually wears down individual peculiarities, and equalizes the whole expression of the religious life. This expression, in fine, when it has become widely extended, and embodied in outward institutions, forms what we term a *distinctive religion in the world.*

Now from this subjective mode of viewing the question, we can advance with some advantage to the task of determining in what the essential element of any distinctive phase of religion consists. Religion itself, as we have seen, under whatever form, supposes the conscious existence of an absolute feeling of dependence; when this emotion takes extensively any peculiar type, it always indicates some deep and general awakening of the religious nature amongst those who possess it—a development of some *particular* conception of man's relation to, and dependence upon, the Infinite Being—a state of self-consciousness, in respect to the Divinity, which has worked powerfully from mind to mind until it assumes a definite expression, it may be in *language*, or in certain peculiar modes of worship. To fix, therefore, the essential characteristic of any historical form of religion, we must look attentively at the outward phenomena it originates, as being the index to the precise state of self-consciousness, which it

more tacitly involves. The rites and ceremonies, the forms of worship, the expressions of adoration, of propitiation, of prayer, or of praise, the actions performed under these impulses, all will be certain indications of some particular state of the inward religious emotions; and it is only when we have examined all these phenomena carefully, and compared one with the other, that we begin to see their internal consistency and grasp at the general idea which lies at the basis of the whole.

Now, Christianity is a religion, and as such must consist essentially, like all other religions, in a certain attitude of man's whole spiritual nature in relation to God. We wish it distinctly to be understood, that we are regarding the whole matter just now, *purely in its subjective point of view*. It is not at all a question with us at present,—what are the *outward* provisions which Christianity involves; or what means have been employed to *bring* the human soul into a certain attitude of dependence upon God. The simple problem is to discover, what that attitude really proves itself to be; or otherwise, what is the distinguishing feature of man's religious nature, when it has come properly under the *Christian* influence. This, it is evident, will be the only real determination of the question in hand; it is the only mode in which we can assign the true nature of Christianity, *relatively* to all other religions in the world, and show wherein its essential and distinguishing feature consists.

It were very easy, in discussing the essence of Christianity, to adduce the prominent facts connected with its establishment in the world, and equally easy to give a sketch of what are esteemed to be its main doctrines; but it is evident that neither of these would offer a solution of the question before us. Those facts, on the one hand, only indicate the outward means by which the Christian consciousness has been awakened in human nature at large; while the doctrines, on the

other hand, are simply a formal or logical expression of the elements of truth, which that consciousness, when awakened, involves. Neither the facts nor the doctrines viewed alone are capable of showing the *essential features* of the Christian life; they are not strictly commensurable with our inward experience; they cannot be the indices by which we compare Christianity, as an attitude of man's spiritual nature towards God, with other forms or phases of religion in the world. What we require to do now, is to see how the Christian consciousness, with all its *distinctive attributes*, has developed itself (through Divine agencies) out of the broader religious feelings of humanity; to point out what these distinctive attributes really are; and thus to discover the essential points in which Christianity, as a form of our religious nature, differs from every other determination which that nature has successively assumed. Regarded in this subjective point of view, Christianity *can* be compared with all the religions of mankind. We can trace the comparative development of the sense of dependence in each, and, as the result of such a comparison, can assign at length what it is in which the real life of Christianity, as a religious experience, essentially consists.*

To *prepare* the way for this conclusion, let us trace briefly the inward process by which the Christian consciousness developed itself immediately out of the religious life of the age in which it arose. We pass by all the external agencies—all the wonderful and miraculous scenes which history records as connected with the introduction of Chris-

* This view of the subject has been most admirably worked out by Professor Maurice, in a course of Lectures entitled "Christ the Desire of all Nations." To those who would see the subjective elements of Christianity placed side by side with those of all the other great prevailing systems of religion, we cannot recommend any work so excellently adapted to the purpose as this.

tianity into the world. Whatever extraordinary means were used for this purpose, yet it is evident that the development of the real elements of Christian experience, and the organization of the Christian life, as a great and widely-extended historical fact in the mind and consciousness of humanity, must have taken place inwardly, according to the universal laws of the religious emotions. Nay further, whatever special and extraordinary *spiritual influences* we suppose to have been exerted, whether through the truth or apart from it, yet we ever regard even these as operating in consistency with the natural elements of the human mind, and the ordinary activities of man's higher spiritual nature.

Hence it will not excite our wonder to find that Christianity, like all other religions, was organized into a distinct spiritual life, and developed as such in the world, through the medium of human fellowship. The apostles themselves drank deep from the fountain-head of Christian truth—from the words, the spirit, the life of Christ. Their own spiritual nature being aroused by the teaching and promised Spirit of the Saviour, they next imparted the sublime ideas thus communicated to others around them, employing for this purpose most commonly the language and the analogies of Judaism. A fellowship of true believers was soon formed by the sympathy and attraction of like religious emotions; the disciples thus united "spake often one with another;" they communicated their mutual impressions; the Spirit of Truth worked mightily amongst them; and the result was a distinctive *religion*—a definite and historical form of spiritual experience, which unfolded itself in the common consciousness of the apostolic Church.

That this was the real process by which Christianity realized itself in the spiritual life of the age, is evident from the whole history of its origin and establishment in the world. Christ left not his Gospel upon earth all formed, and stated

in words and propositions. He left behind him simply the living seeds of great moral and spiritual ideas in the minds of his followers, with the promise of his Spirit to cherish them into their proper growth and mature fruits. Neither was it immediately after the resurrection of the Saviour that Christianity, as a moral phenomenon in human life, was completed. So far from that, much darkness, much doubt, and many dim perceptions of Christian truth were long observable in the minds of the Apostles themselves, as well as their followers. Often did they meet together; often did they deliberate over great and essential points; often did they correct each other, as one saw his brother lingering too much amongst Jewish prejudices; often did they pray for Divine light and guidance; and it was not until years of fellowship had been enjoyed—until the common consciousness had become awakened—until the Spirit of Truth had moulded their hearts and minds into some appreciable unity of thought and feeling, that Christianity as an entire religious system appeared.

This process which I have described, indeed, was necessary from the very laws and constitution of the religious emotions. Even if Christ had spoken his whole mind and will to the apostles, that would not have constituted a *religion*, in the living experience of mankind; that would not have *been* Christianity itself, however adapted to awaken it. Christianity, like every other religion, consists essentially in a state of man's inner consciousness, which developes itself into a system of thought and activity only in a community of awakened minds; and it was inevitable, therefore, that such a state of consciousness should require time, and intercourse, and mutual sympathy, before it could become moulded into a decided and distinctive form. Apostolical Christianity consisted essentially in the religious consciousness of the first great Christian community. But for such a community, the

truths and principles which Christ left behind him in the germ, could never have fructified; but for such a community, the Christian love could not have been vitally developed (for love can only exist and grow in society); but for such a community, in one word, there could have been no *historical realization*, and consequently no living example to the world of Christianity at all.

Having thus developed, in the foregoing remarks, the precise nature of the *question*, to which the present chapter is devoted; having shown that the essential nature of any distinctive form of religion is to be looked for in the direction it gives to the thoughts, impulses, and emotions of a united fellowship, as regards their views of the dependence of the world upon God; we have next to inquire what great and peculiar feature has been presented in the whole development of Christianity in the world, which distinguishes it manifestly from every other form of the religious life.

Before we proceed to offer and expound our own definition of Christianity, it may be as well to enumerate a few of the definitions which have been already proposed by some of the most eminent Christian philosophers. The following is an example of those which have been current among the rationalistic theologians. I take it from the writings of Klein, one of the best of those authors. He denominates Christianity, "Modus cognoscendi et colendi Deum per Christum traditus." This definition, it is evident, is merely *formal;* it does not in any way express what the essential nature of the knowledge or the worship really is. Hase gives the following definition: "Christianity is a conviction that the completion of the religious life has appeared historically in Christ, and that our own life approaches this completion in a fellowship inspired by his Spirit." This definition is more significant than the last, but is still deficient in *subjective intensity;* since it fails to point out in what par-

ticular manner the religious life involved in Christianity differs from all others. Schleiermacher's somewhat remarkable definition runs as follows:—"Christianity is a monotheistic belief, belonging to the practical form of piety, which distinguishes itself essentially from all others by the fact, that every thing in it is referred to the redemption completed by Jesus of Nazareth." The following definition of Nitzsch will probably be thought far more simple:—"Christianity is a mode of life which rests upon the consciousness of the redemption of the world, and of the personal Redeemer, Jesus Christ."

Now, in considering attentively these two last definitions, it is evident that they attempt to combine in one view both a subjective and an objective element. They offer some account, on the one hand, of the subjective attitude of the religious emotions involved in Christianity, while they refer, on the other hand, to those great outward facts and phenomena with which these emotions stand inseparably connected as their cause. To make the statement of the case full and complete, it appears to me that a twofold definition is absolutely needful; the one side of which will define the precise state of the religious emotions, which Christianity indicates; the other side of which will define the exterior conditions, under which such a state is superinduced. In both cases alike Christianity will be a form of human experience; but in the one case it will involve the consciousness of an inward moral relationship towards God, in the latter case that of an outward providential relationship to certain Divine arrangements. These two states of consciousness ought, of course, to be reciprocal; the one should virtually involve the other; so that, whichever side be presented to our contemplation, the other may immediately come to view. Instead, therefore, of attempting to include both the subjective and the objective principle of Christianity in a single definition, we shall offer

two definitions, which may be regarded as complements of each other.

Taking then first the *subjective* point of view, and waiving for the present all reference to any outward facts or phenomena, we may define Christianity as "*that form of religion in which we are conscious of absolute dependence and perfect moral freedom being harmonized by love to God.*"

The highest state of human nature which we can conceive to exist on earth, is that in which the moral element, or the principle of freedom, and the religious element, or the sense of dependence, are perfectly balanced; so that each may have its full play without impeding the due influence of the other. This state, we have to show, is that in which Christianity, subjectively speaking, consists; a state which precisely realizes the definition as stated above.

Now, if we regard the mass of humanity as having become reduced by the influence of evil into a state of spiritual idolatry and moral degradation, such as that described by Paul from his own personal experience, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, it is impossible not to see in it at once a total disorganization both of the *moral* and *religious* nature; a fearful abuse of human freedom on the one side, and of religious obligation on the other.

The sense of freedom which man enjoys was intended to be regulated by *conscience*, including under that term the absolute *law* of right, and the categoric imperative to fulfil it. Instead of this, we find in the Heathen world at once a violation of the law, and a resistance to the imperative:—"They not only do things," says Paul, "worthy of death, but they take *pleasure* in those that do them." With reference again to the religious nature, or the sense of dependence, there we find them "changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an *image*,—changing the truth into a lie, and worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator." Immersed in

such a condition, it is needless to say man *needed* a moral education to bring his powers, dispositions, and affections into a right and normal state.

Supposing now a child to be in a state of hatred, of opposition, and of revolt against the will, authority, and affection of a parent,—what would be the moral process by which he must be restored to a right state of thought and feeling? The sense of obligation being lost, the spark of affection quenched, there being not only an opposition to parental command, but a *pleasure* in that opposition, the feeling of dependence upon the parent being coupled with hatred and misery, what, we ask, would necessarily be the first step towards the moral recovery of such a child? The appeal to duty would be useless, for the sense of duty is lost; the appeal to affection would be vain, for the spark of love has died out; the appeal to interest would be equally fruitless, for happiness only seems possible apart from the parental control. Evidently in such a case the child must be constrained to feel his *actual dependence* on the parent; he must learn to realize by stern measures the *necessity* of parental support, and to feel the arm of parental power; he must have correction coupled with kindness, and awe inspired by the enforcement of duty. When all other motives are closed up, the rebellious child must be *forced* into the right path, as the first step to his discovery of its real excellence and its superior happiness.

Such, accordingly, was the method which God employed to break down the opposition of mankind against himself; for human discipline is the same in *principle* by whomsoever it may be applied, and the true moral procedure of a parent can only be grounded on the laws of human nature, and of moral truth as emanating from God. The religious discipline of the Jewish dispensation was to a great extent one of *fear*. There were the commands engraven on stone and enforced by penalty; there were the constant appeals to outward reward

and punishment; there were the curses of the law against the disobedient:—all this mingled at the same time with expressions of Divine favor and love, in order thus to appeal to all the different springs of the human will, as they should become successively awakened. Here the moral law was *sternly enjoined;* the sense of dependence was *constrained;* and the truth was manifested, that in the process of human recovery "the *fear* of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

It matters little to the moral aspect of the question, whether we make the supernatural element in Judaism greater or less; *there* is the fact impressed undoubtedly upon the very face of the Jewish records, that man had a religion of this nature; that in the historical development of Providence such moral and spiritual influences were *actually* made to bear upon him; that this was a real phase of moral and religious consciousness, through which a portion of humanity passed, and that portion, moreover, from which, historically, the Christian life has emanated.

Here in fact we have the key to the right comprehension of the Old Testament. It contains a description of the religious consciousness as it was in the ancient Hebrew world; it gives us a picture of that process of moral discipline through which the Christian consciousness was at length developed; and never should we forget, in reading those records, that we are carried into a period in which the storms of human passion were being quelled by fear as well as by love; and that consequently the whole development of *moral* as well as religious truth stands upon a far lower sphere than the truth which has been developed in the Christian Church.

The termination of the Jewish economy brought the system of enforcement and restraint to a close. More and more clearly did it become evident that the law was only a schoolmaster to exercise a wholesome discipline until the period of voluntary submission to the Divine will should arrive. But

submission is not all: the mere exercise of a voluntary dependence upon God is not alone sufficient to produce the genuine elements of Christian life. There may be a voluntary absolute dependence which arises from an overwhelming sense of the Divine sovereignty and omniscience, disconnected with the perception either of moral requirements in God, or of moral duty in man. There may be, in a word, such a thing as a *theistic fatalism* in which the human *will*, instead of being harmonized with the religious feelings, is absorbed and annihilated by them. This form of monotheistic religion has developed itself chiefly in Mohammedanism, the religion of fate—a system which stands above Judaism as regards the sense of resignation, but immeasurably below it in the lively realization of moral obligation both towards God and man. Fatalism aims, indeed, at transcending the Hebrew standpoint, but it does so only at the expense of cancelling every thing which has a moral worth, or which can produce a really moral effect upon mankind. It makes obedience to flow from absolute necessity, not from choice or from love.

We may therefore now perceive what is the purest and highest form to which the religious consciousness *can* attain. It is that in which absolute resignation to God is realized, not by constraint or necessity, but by a perfectly moralized and enlightened state of the *will*. The more a man is free to act without fear or restraint, the more complete is he *as a free agent;* and the more a man does every thing in dependence upon God, so much the more of the *religious* element he evinces. Let these two elements, then, be brought into harmony with each other; let a man be free to follow out his own will, and let that will ever tend towards God as the great centre of his being, of his hope, and of his joy,—and no more perfect state of relationship between God and man can be conceived.

Again, as the springs which move the will are the de-

sires or affections of the heart, it is clear, that for the will to be active, and *ever* active in this particular direction, there must be some great affection which is ever impelling it upwards; which affection, practically speaking, will be the middle point and focus of the religious life. This ruling affection is *love*, the antagonist of fear; and consequently, when love is perfect, dependence will be hallowed, voluntary obedience will be delightful, and the religious consciousness will be complete.

It is hardly necessary to take up any time in proving that this religious consciousness which I have described is veritably the Christian consciousness. Voluntary obedience, freedom from all mere ceremonial restraint, holy love, living for the Infinite and the Eternal—all these are the grand characteristics of the Christian life, and have been developed *only* under the Christian idea. All the facts and phenomena, all the sufferings and toils, all the worship and the outward life of the early Church show, that these were the great thoughts and impulses under which they lived and moved and had their being. The sole ground on which any doubt could be thrown upon this conclusion, is the fact, that, considering the number of centuries through which Christianity has existed, and the immense extent over which it has spread, there has been, comparatively speaking, so little of this sublime elevation of the religious consciousness actually realized. There are two things, however, which must never be forgotten in connection with this subject; and these are, first, that every thing which has borne the name of Christianity is not *really* so; and secondly, that even where the genuine Christian consciousness is attained to, still it is often very dimly developed, and much disfigured by the intermixture of inferior elements. Few men, if any, have ever realized even their own hopes and visions of the Christian life; and while the world is progressing to that state in which we

look for the kingdom of peace to be universally established, we must be content with the *struggles* of humanity *after* that high standard which Christianity has placed before us, and rest upon the hope that it may at length be transferred from a mere vision to a living realization.

Christianity, in fact, as a vital principle, has not yet conquered even the nations which are called by its name; nor has yet ceased for a moment to struggle against those inferior elements which really exist amongst ourselves, although they have a local habitation and a name only with the Mahometan and the Jew. The Jewish consciousness—the religion of bondage and restraint, is largely found even in the Christian Church; and never does the slavery of formalism, never does the maceration of the ascetic, never does the striving after religious faith, simply as a means of escaping the pains of hell, present itself to our view, but we recognize a state of feeling which falls altogether below the Christian elevation, and see the continued necessity of the apostolic memorial, "We have not received the spirit of bondage *again* to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Neither is the great feature of the Mahometan consciousness wanting, as an element in the religion of many Christians. There are not a few in whose inward imaginations and feelings the sovereignty of God predominates so greatly over his moral attributes, that their relation to him becomes rather the fixed connection of an iron fatalism, than the affectionate dependence of a child adopted and beloved by its father. Such a state of the religious consciousness may give a sullen and abandoned resignation, but it is infinitely removed from those bands of love by which the Christian mind is bound fast in voluntary submission to the Eternal *will*.

The inflexible and determined sternness with which the extreme Calvinist goes forth to the *task* of Christian duty, has

many features in common with the spirit of Islamism, when it wielded the sword of God, as an eternally elected instrument of accomplishing his decrees. In both, indeed, we have the strength of purpose infused from a deep sense of the Divine sovereignty; but in both we miss more or less that blending of *freedom* with resignation, which is only produced by the perfection of love.

The following passage from Mr. Maurice's Lectures, above referred to, beautifully illustrates the sentiments we have developed:—"But it is possible for Christians to take another course, if it be another,—it is possible for them apparently to exalt the Judicial or Mahometan side of Christianity, though they do not belong to the family of Abraham, and may care nothing about the Arabian Prophet. In practice Christians have done this, when they have attempted to copy Jewish example in the manner of propagating their faith, really copying not that but Mahometan example; for we truly copy Jewish example, as I have shown you, when we go forth as national bodies under our national Sovereign to resist wrong and robbery, and to maintain the position which God has given us; we copy Mahometan example when we attempt to spread the principles of the universal family which is based upon the love of God, and the sacrifice of Christ, and the gift of the spirit of meekness and charity, by any other methods than those of love and sacrifice and meekness. We seem to copy Jewish example, we really copy Mahometan example, when we seek for any visible mortal man to reign over the universal family; for the Jewish King reigned not over the universe, but over a particular nation; and, so soon as a universal society grew out of the national one, it was the glorious proclamation, that an unseen King, who had ascended to the right hand of God, was its only Sovereign. We seem to copy Jewish example, we really copy Mahometan example, when we set visible and outward rewards before us, as the

prizes of our high calling; for though the Jew lived especially to assert God's dominion over the earth, and to rule it and subdue it for him, yet the reward he always kept in sight was that he might know him who exercised righteousness and judgment in the earth, that he might wake up in his likeness and be satisfied with it. In like manner we copy the example of the modern Jew and of the Mahometan, not of the ancient Jew, or if of the ancient Jew, only of the formal heartless Pharisee, when we receive the Bible, not as a record of actual doings, of actual intercourse between a living Being and us his creatures upon earth, but only as a collection of notions and opinions about which we are to dispute and tear each other to pieces. Still more effectually do we assume the character of the servant of the prophet, of the degenerate Israelite, when we set up the dry confession of God's sovereignty against his righteousness, supposing that his acts are ever acts of self-will; that his glory is ever any thing but the glory of purity and goodness and truth. In all these ways we may prove that there is indeed a very near relation between our belief and theirs; inasmuch as we can hold the one under the name of the other."

In the foregoing remarks, we have considered the *subjective* side of Christianity; showing its essential nature to consist in an inward state of consciousness in reference to man's relationship with God. We must now turn briefly to the *objective* side of the question. Here our definition, instead of pointing to the internal relationship of man to God, takes into account the *outward features* of the Divine purpose in the restoration of mankind. In this point of view we may define Christianity as *That religion which rests upon the consciousness of the redemption of the world through Jesus Christ.* Here we have two elements involved, both of which are necessary to complete the conception of Christianity ob-

jectively considered. The one is the idea of redemption, the other is that of a personal and historical Redeemer.

The redemption of the world, in the most general acceptation of the term, involves the notion of a universal change of mankind from one, and that an evil condition, into a better and holier state. What may be the nature and extent of this change cannot be decided in a *general* definition, but must be drawn from a complete survey of Christian doctrine and precept. The notion, however, of some such a universal change, is implied in the very barest conception of Christianity, as a Divine appointment. The proclamation, indeed, of a new and spiritual kingdom, erected by express ordination of God, forms the very foundation idea of the preaching of Christ, and the teaching of his apostles.

Again, this universal change is referred to the agency of an historical person, and is not in any way regarded as the spontaneous action of humanity in rectifying itself. Neither of these two elements then can be dispensed with in an objective view of Christianity. If we look to the personal Redeemer *alone*, and omit the universal redemption, regarding Christianity simply as a form of religious worship introduced by Jesus Christ, we reduce it to the level of any other system of worship which the history of the past presents. Christianity, however, in its nature, does not admit this; it claims a special mission from the one only God, it embraces all mankind in its scope of action, it promises to merge all other religions into itself, and to bring the whole world into that better and holier state which the term redemption implies. Nor will it satisfy the idea of Christianity, if we include in it the redemption of the world, without the historical reference to a personal Redeemer. For this redemption might have come in that case through any system of agency we please; it might owe one feature to one person, and one to another; in fact, we should reduce

Christianity then from a unitary system, having one great central point of consciousness, to the general idea of human progress; which would altogether fail to distinguish it *generically* from other attempts at the amelioration of mankind.

The two great and essential points, accordingly, here are —the *exclusiveness* of Christianity, as the sole appointed means of human recovery, and the concentration of the agency for such recovery in the life and person of Christ, historically considered. With regard to the precise nature of the change effected, there may be higher or lower views of it, according to the intensity of the religious life in the believer; and, in reference to the history of Christ, the application of criticism may give a greater or a smaller *miraculous* element to its whole conception. Either of these may considerably affect the character and the influence of the Christian life, but they cannot deprive it of its *essential* elements. Where there is a deep penetration of the heart with a consciousness of sin in the individual and in the world—where there is a spiritual perception of the necessity and the reality of the recovery to holiness and joy in the kingdom of God on earth and in heaven—when the prime agency of this recovery is concentrated in Jesus Christ, as a special administrator of Almighty wisdom and love for this purpose—there the objective idea of Christianity is *realized* in its great scheme, although it may *yet* have to be filled up into its fuller intensity.

If the two definitions we have given be valid, then, as we have before said, they ought to be reciprocals of each other. And such, by the common consent of the Christian world, they are. Wherever absolute dependence and perfect freedom are reconciled by love to God, there we recognize the redemption which has been completed by Christ; and wherever this redemption is honestly accepted as the middle

point of our religious life, there we recognize the religion of perfect resignation, perfect freedom, and perfect love. There may be many variations in detail, many degrees of clearness in the perception of Christian ideas, many dogmatic peculiarities occasioned by education, by temperament, or by other circumstances; but, in the two definitions we have given, the essential elements of Christianity are involved. He whose religious life is grounded upon the consciousness of the redemption of the world, and consequently of *himself* through Jesus Christ, and who exhibits the reality of this life by resignation to the will of God, joyous freedom in serving him, and the expansive spirit of love—this man, be his minor peculiarities what they may, we venture to denominate—*A Christian*.

CHAPTER V.

ON REVELATION.

We have now discussed, in the two preceding chapters, the nature of religion, as an element in man's spiritual constitution, and the nature of Christianity, as the highest form of the religious life. Throughout the whole of these discussions we have kept strictly within the subjective sphere of observation, and occupied ourselves only with the interior phases of man's religious consciousness. We have said nothing as yet respecting the process by which such phenomena of man's interior being are produced, nothing respecting the secret link, which unites them with any outward causality, nothing respecting the laws by which they are brought into existence, regulated, and finally developed to their full maturity.

While, therefore, Christianity, looked at from this subjective point of view, is rightly described as a specific form of man's religious nature, yet, when regarded in relation to the *method* by which it is communicated to the human mind, we are equally correct in designating it as "A Revelation from God." The term *revelation* is one of those popular expressions, than which none perhaps is more perpetually heard upon the lips of almost all classes of thinking men; and yet there is no term within the whole range of religious inquiry which is less clearly understood, and more vaguely employed —none, therefore, which on all accounts stands in greater

need of a rigid analysis, and a clear elucidation. To furnish, therefore, such an analysis, and such an elucidation, must be our next attempt in the present work.

In entering upon this analysis, we must follow substantially the same course as that which has been adopted in the discussion of the preceding questions; that is to say, we must attempt to grasp the generic idea conveyed under the notion of a Divine revelation, and lay bare what is essential to the conception itself; and having done this, to follow it up into its more distinctive forms.

In discussing the nature of religion, we found it to centre in the sense of absolute dependence; starting from that point, we traced it through all its different phases, until it attains its highest and purest forms in the Divine experiences of *Christianity*. In the same manner we shall now seek to determine what is the *essential* element in the idea of a *revelation from God;* and having determined this, we shall be the more prepared to comprehend the *specific* forms, in which such revelations have been made.

The idea of a revelation always implies a process by which knowledge, in some form or other, is communicated to an intelligent being. For a revelation at all to exist, there must be an intelligent being, on the one hand, adapted to receive it; and there must be, on the other hand, a process by which this same intelligent being becomes cognizant of certain facts or ideas. Suppress either of these conditions, and no revelation can exist. The preaching of an angel would be no revelation to an idiot; a Bible in Chinese would offer none to a European. In the former case there is no intelligence capable of receiving the ideas conveyed; in the latter case the process of conveyance renders the whole thing practically a nonenity, by allowing no idea whatever to reach the mind. We may say, then, in few words, that a revelation always indicates *a mode of intelligence*. This point should

be carefully realized in the outset, since we are almost insensibly led, in many instances, to interchange the idea of a revelation with the object revealed, and introduce, ere we are aware, great confusion into the whole subject.

If, then, a revelation necessarily signifies *a mode of intelligence*, we have next to determine *what mode of intelligence it is*, which the term revelation implies. Now we have already seen that there are two modes of intelligence possible to man in his present state. These are the *intuitional* and the *logical*. In the former case we arrive at truth, by a direct and immediate gazing upon it. The subject stands immediately in presence of the object and perceives it; hence we term the process in some instances *perception*, as when we come in contact with the external world through the senses; and sometimes *intuition*, as when we have a direct knowledge, through the interior eye of consciousness, of higher and more spiritual realities. In the logical mode of intelligence, on the contrary, we arrive at truth *mediately*, either by some calculation or inference of our own, or by some definition or explanation from the lips of another. Thus all the different methods of analysis, of reasoning, of definition, of explication, belong to the province of the logical consciousness, and imply simply the proper use of the fixed laws of thought, within the sphere of our present experience.

These two modes of intelligence, then, are the *only two*, adapted to the present state of the human mind. To imagine a third mode is a psychological impossibility. In every case we shall find that our knowledge comes to us either by a direct perception, or by some logical process of defining, or of reasoning—a process, *sometimes palpable, and sometimes* almost too subtle, to be distinctly traced. Accordingly, if revelation be *a mode or process of intelligence*, it must rank generically under one of the two processes just described. In saying this we do not put any negation or restriction upon

the Divine wisdom, power or goodness, in employing specific and extraordinary means for the purpose of human enlightenment. All we mean is this—that whatever means are employed, they must be always adapted to the essential modes of human intelligence; and that the process of *intelligence* itself, in the case of a Divine revelation, must, *as far as the exercise of our own minds is concerned*, be in accordance with the spiritual constitution which God has himself given us. Any other supposition would imply a miraculous reconstruction of the human mind as a condition to its receiving the knowledge supposed; so that the revelation would not be a revelation made *to man*, but to a being miraculously raised above the level of humanity.

In considering, then, under which of the two great generic modes of intelligence, we have to class the particular case involved in the idea of a revelation, we can have but little hesitation in referring it at once to the category of *intuition*. The idea of a revelation is universally considered to imply a case of intelligence in which something is presented *directly* to the mind of the subject; in which it is conveyed by the immediate agency of God himself; in which our own efforts would have been unavailing to attain the same conceptions; in which the truth communicated could not have been drawn by inference from any data previously known; and, finally, in which the whole result is one lying beyond the reach of the logical understanding.

Now, all these particulars exactly agree with the nature and general laws of *intuition*. Let us consider them briefly in detail.

First. Intuition, in like manner as revelation, implies that the object of intelligence is presented *directly* to our contemplation. So closely does intuition resemble our idea of a revelation *in this respect*, that we may see the strictest analogy between them, even in that lower kind of intuition

which we term "perception by the senses." The philosophy of perception has, by general consent, evolved the fact, that our knowledge of the external world is *immediate*—that it is not gathered by influence, nor mediated by any inward representation; but that it is a case in which the subject stands directly in face of the outward reality, and at once *knows* it. We may say, therefore, without doing any violence to the ordinary usage of the word, that our knowledge of the material universe is *a revelation*. Imagine that we had been present at the moment when light and order first broke in upon primeval chaos; imagine that from a state of darkness we saw the universe spring forth into harmony and beauty; should we not have regarded the conceptions which streamed in upon our minds as being, in the strictest sense, a Divine revelation? But what *was* a revelation to the minds which first witnessed it, must, as far as its real nature and mode of communication is concerned, be *always* a revelation. The fact that the world is a standing reality into which we are born, and amidst which we live, does not alter its relation in any respect to the human reason, as being a Divine manifestation. Taking, therefore, the *generic* sense of the term *revelation*, we may say with perfect truth, that the universe is a revelation to the human mind—as much a revelation as is every thing else which comes home to our consciousness by a direct and immediate presentation.

Secondly. Intuition, in the same manner as revelation, implies, that the knowledge involved in it is presented to us immediately *by God*. This is true respecting those ordinary conceptions which we are apt to separate altogether from the Divine operations. Are not the forms of beauty, and the high ideas embodied *in nature*, immediate manifestations of the thoughts of God to the human mind? To see and appreciate these, there must exist, on the one hand, a perfect adaptation in the human faculties for the purpose; and there

must be, on the other hand, the direct presentation of the objective reality to them. If either be wanting, there is no Divine manifestation; the conditions of its possibility are not fulfilled. Considering, therefore, this mutual adaptation of the human faculties and the external world to each other; considering that there must be the exact sensibility which is requisite in the one, and the due presentation of the ideas of God embodied in the forms and developments of the other, can we reject the inference, that the process by which we gaze admiringly upon the wonders of nature, is a mode of intelligence that implies, in its generic sense, a direct revelation to us *from God* himself? The case is still plainer when we turn to the higher spheres of intuition; for what other can we say, in reference to the conceptions we enjoy of the true, the beautiful, and the good, than that they are placed before our mental vision by the direct agency of Him who is the source and centre of all truth and goodness and beauty.

Thirdly. Intuition, in the same manner as revelation, implies, that the knowledge involved in it could not have been gained by our own efforts. There are many truths which we arrive at distinctly by the effort of our own faculties consciously directed towards them. Of this kind, for example, is the whole region of knowledge which comes to us by *inference* from some other data. The great peculiarity, on the contrary, of that portion of our knowledge which comes through the process of intuition is, that it is not derived from any previous knowledge whatever—that there is no *inference* in the case—that we receive it immediately as a direct manifestation to our minds. In this respect, accordingly, there is a perfect identity between the idea of revelation and that of intuition. In the one case, as in the other, there are no antecedent data to which the knowledge implied in it can be referred; in both instances alike, there is a re-

ception of truth without the intermediate step of any inferential process whatever.

Lastly. As a corollary from the foregoing consideration, we may add, that intuition, in the same manner as revelation, implies a *kind* of knowledge which, in its origin, lies beyond the region of the understanding. The logical understanding, as we have fully explained, supplies only the form of our notions, or infers one truth from another; in no case does it furnish the elementary material, out of which our knowledge is *primarily* drawn. Accordingly, every truth which is brought before it, and on which it operates as the bare material of its notions, must have come *essentially* through some intuitional process before it could be laid hold of by the understanding, or attain a reflective form. Hence, if it be the peculiarity of a revelation, that it brings us in contact with knowledge which, in its origin, lies altogether beyond the region of the understanding, the same thing is equally true of intuition likewise; and thus establishes, *quo ad hoc*, the clear similarity between them.

Any branch of our intuitional consciousness will serve as an illustration of this point. Take the perception of *beauty*. The logical understanding we feel has nothing to do with this perception in its elementary form. True it is, that we may seek to reduce the sense of the beautiful to a scientific *expression*, by the logical process of definition; but the perception itself is the result of an original sensibility—it is an intuition, and, generically speaking, may be termed a *revelation*. So it is, also, with the elementary conceptions of moral truth. The idea of the good—the eternal law of *right*,—cannot be *inferred*; nor can it even be *grasped* simply by the understanding. It may, indeed, be thrown by it into a scientific form; but the elemental idea comes directly from the moral sense; it is an intuition in like manner as is the perception of beauty, and may be termed, with equal

propriety, a *revelation*. All these points, accordingly, which we have enumerated, tend to show us, that if the term *revelation* imply, generically, a *form of intelligence*, it must belong to that particular mode of intellectual activity which we assign to the *intuitional consciousness*.

In order to demonstrate, however, that this conclusion is fully correct, we ought not only to prove a series of resemblances between the idea of revelation and that of intuition, but we ought also to show, that the whole of the *logical* processes of the human mind are such, that the idea of a revelation is altogether incompatible with them—that they are in no sense open to its influence, and that they can neither be improved or assisted by it.

All our logical processes of mind—all the operations of the understanding, take place in accordance with the most fixed and determinate laws—those which are usually termed *the laws of thought*. Whatever can be inferred by these laws, whatever derived in any way from them, must be strictly within the natural capacity of the human mind to attain. If, on the contrary, there be any thing which these laws of thought are naturally unable to reach, no extraneous influence whatever could give them the power of reaching it. The laws of thought are immovable; to alter them would be to subvert the whole constitution of the human intellect. Whatever is once within their reach, is always so. Correct reasoning could never be subverted by revelation itself; bad reasoning could never be improved by it. In short, we may say, that the logical processes are legitimately confined within the actual region of our present experience; for we can never reason about objects of which we have no present idea, never investigate truths of which we have no conception, never employ our understanding upon a sphere which lies altogether beyond the present range of our mental vision.

This is true *absolutely* with respect to all the different processes of the logical consciousness, whatever they may be. Take, for example, *definition*. Definition, it is evident, implies some previous knowledge of the thing to be defined; neither can the most accurate definition convey to any mind the notion of a reality, of which it has never had any kind of personal experience. Where no such experience exists, we can only attempt to convey the idea in question by comparing it with some *other* experience which it most nearly resembles.

Take again the logical process termed reasoning. It is supposed by many, that by means of reasoning we can arrive at conceptions, of which we had no sort of previous idea whatever. This supposition, however, it is almost needless to say, will not bear examination. Whether our reasoning be inductive or deductive, the conclusion of the whole is always virtually involved in the premises. To reason *at all*, we must have certain *data*, and must also employ distinct and intelligible terms; but, it is evident, these data and these terms always imply an amount of experience in the question, without which all our reasoning would be empty, and beyond which our conclusion can never go. Logical reasoning alters the *relations* of our ideas—it never transcends them. It makes our knowledge more distinct; it does not expand the horizon of our mental vision. As far as definition and reasoning are concerned, therefore, they have manifestly no community whatever with the process of intelligence which we term *revelation*. The object of a revelation is to bring us altogether into another and higher region of actual experience, to increase our mental vision, to give us new data from which we may draw new inferences; and all this lies quite apart from the activity of the logical faculty.

There is, however, one more process coming within the

province of the logical faculty, which might appear at first sight to be far more nearly compatible with the idea of a revelation, and through the medium of which, indeed, many suppose that the actual revelations of God to man have been made. The process to which I refer is that of verbal exposition. Could not a revelation from God, it might be naturally urged, consist in an exposition of truth, made to us by the lips or from the pen of an inspired messenger, that exposition coming distinctly under the idea of a *logical explication of doctrines*, which it is for mankind to receive, as sent to us on Divine authority?

Now this is a case of considerable complexity, and one which we must essay as clearly as possible to unravel. First of all, then, we have no doubt whatever but that there have been agents commissioned by God to bring mankind to a proper conception of Divine Truth, and comprehension of the Divine will. But now let us look a little more closely into their real mission, and consider the means by which alone it was possible for them to fulfil it.

These Divine messengers, we will suppose, address their fellow-men in the words and phrases they are accustomed to hear, and seek in this way to expound to them the truth of God. If we imagine ourselves, then, to be the listeners, it is needless to say, that so long as they treat of ideas which lie *within* the range of our present experience, we should be well able at once to comprehend them, and to judge of the grounds on which they urge them upon our attention. But it is manifest that such a discourse as I describe could in no proper sense be termed *a revelation*. So long as the Divine teacher keeps within the range of our present intellectual experience, he might indeed throw things into a new light, he might point out more accurately their connection, he might show us at once their importance and their logical consistency; but all this would not amount to *a revelation*,

it would give us no *immediate* manifestation of truth from God, it would offer no conceptions lying beyond the range of our present data, it would quite fail in bringing us into contact with new realities, nor would it at all extend the sweep of our mental vision. Mere exposition always *presupposes* some familiarity with the subject in hand; one idea has always, in such a case, to be explained by another; but supposing there to be an entire blindness of mind upon the whole question, then it is manifest that all mere logical definition and explication is for the time entirely thrown away.

Illustrations of this are as numerous as are the sciences, or the subjects of human research. Let a man, for example, totally unacquainted with the matter, hear another converse with the greatest clearness about differential quantities in physics or mathematics—how much of the explanation would he be able to comprehend? He has not yet the experiences of space, number, or motion, on which the intelligibleness of the whole depends; and in want of these the whole of the explanations offered are involved in the darkest obscurity. Take up any other subject, such as biology, ethics, or metaphysics, in their higher and more recondite branches. Explication here is of no avail, unless the mind first realize for itself and reproduce in its own thinking, the fundamental conceptions of the teacher. What is true of perceptive teaching in the case of the infant, is true, in a modified sense, of all human education, to the most advanced stage of intelligence. You must in every instance alike take proper means to awaken the power of vision within, to furnish direct experiences to the mind, in brief, to give clear intuitions of the *elements* of truth, before you can produce any effect by the most complete process of defining or explanation.

Let us return, then, to the supposed case of the inspired teacher, and proceed with our analysis of the conditions that

are necessary to his becoming the medium of a revelation, properly so called. We have seen, that if he always kept within the region of our present experience, there would be no fresh revelation made to us at all: but now, let us imagine him to *transcend* the present sphere of our mental vision;—it is evident from what I have just said, that in such a case we should be by no means in a condition to comprehend his meaning; on the supposition, of course, that he was to confine himself to *mere exposition*. The only way in which he could give us a revelation of truth hitherto unrealized, would be by becoming the agent of elevating our inward religious consciousness up to the same or a similar standard as his own; which is the same thing as if we had said that all revelation, properly so called, can be made to us primarily only in the form of religious *intuition*.

The matters on which Christianity treats (to take this now as our example) are extremely elevated, and very far removed from the ordinary sphere of human thought. To a man utterly ignorant of all spiritual conceptions, and altogether insensible to Divine things, the mere exposition of the truths and doctrines of Christianity is *useless*. He does not grasp them at all in their proper meaning and intensity: ranging as they do beyond the sphere of his present experience, the very terms of the propositions employed awaken no corresponding idea within his mind.

Imagine yourself, by definitions and explications addressed to the understanding, attempting to make a blind man, who had never gazed upon nature, comprehend the exquisite beauties in form, hue, and graceful motion, presented to the eye by a summer's landscape. It is needless to say that all your descriptions would fall infinitely short of the actual reality—that they would not convey the hundredth part of what one minute's gaze upon the scene would spontaneously present—that he could only conceive, indeed, of any portion

of it by *analogies* taken from the other senses. The reason of this is, that he knows the thing only formally, by logical exposition; he has never had the proper experiences, never the direct sense-perceptions, which are absolutely necessary to a full realization of it.

And so is it, *mutatis mutandis*, with religious truth. You may expound and define and argue upon the high themes which Christianity presents to the contemplation; but unless a man have the intuitions, on which all mere verbal expositions must be grounded, there is no revelation of the spiritual reality to his mind, and there can be no clearer perception of the actual truth, than there is to the blind man of the vision of beauty which lies veiled in darkness around him.

In making these statements, we are simply putting in a more definite form what almost all classes of Christians fully admit, and what they are perpetually asserting. Is it not allowed that men even of intellect and learning may read the Bible through and through again, and yet may have no spiritual perception of the realities to which it refers? Do we not constantly hear it asserted that Divine truth must be spiritually understood? Nay, does not St. Paul himself tell us that the things of the Spirit of God must be spiritually discerned? And what does all this amount to, but that there must be the awakening of the religious consciousness before the truth is actually revealed to us, and that it can only be revealed to us at all, essentially speaking, in the form of religious intuition. The severest criticism, the hardest study, the most patient poring over the propositions in which the faith of Christians is embodied, confessedly do not *alone* suffice to give to any one a single perception of truth in its spiritual intensity. This is, in fact, nothing but saying that the logical understanding can never perform for us the part of the higher or intuitional consciousness.

If we consider attentively the whole process by which

Christianity has been revealed to man, we shall see that it has been carried on precisely in accordance with the principles above stated. The aim of revelation has not been formally to expound a system of doctrine to the understanding, but to educate the mind of man gradually to an inward appreciation of the truth concerning his own relation to God. Judaism was a propædeutic to Christianity; but there was no formal definition of any one spiritual truth in the whole of that economy. The purpose of it was to school the mind to spiritual contemplation; to awaken the religious consciousness by types and symbols, and other perceptive means, to the realization of certain great spiritual ideas; and to furnish words and analogies in which the truths of Christianity could be embodied and proclaimed to the world.

If we pass on to the Christian revelation itself, the mode of procedure we find was generically the same. There was no *formal* exposition of Christian doctrine in the whole of the discourses of the Saviour. His life and teaching—his character—his death and resurrection—all appealed to the deeper religious nature of man; they were adapted to awaken it to a new and higher activity; instead of offering a mere explication to the understanding, they were intended to furnish altogether *new experiences*, to widen the sphere of our spiritual insight, to embody a *revelation from God*.

The apostles followed in the same course. They did not start from Jerusalem with a system of doctrine to propound intellectually to the world. It would have been no revelation to the world if they had; for with his moral and spiritual nature sunk down into insensibility and sin, man would have had no real spiritual perception associated with the very terms in which their arguments and propositions must have been couched. The apostles went forth to awaken man's power of spiritual intuition; to impress upon the world the great conceptions of sin, of righteousness, of judg-

ment to come, of salvation, of purity, and of heavenly love. This they did by their lives, their teaching, their spiritual *intensity* in action and suffering, their whole testimony to the word, the person, the death, and the resurrection of the Saviour. In the case of St. Paul alone do we find any approach to a systematic inculcation of truth by logical exposition addressed to the understanding; and in this case we must remember that the letters he wrote were intended for those who were already Christians, whose religious nature was already awakened, who had already enjoyed, in this awakening, the revelations of Christianity properly so called. His writings, therefore, were designed not so much to be a revelation of truth, as a further explication of it. Based upon a revelation already made, they were adapted simply to bring the ideas it involved into a more explicit and somewhat reflective form, and thus to furnish us with an inspired authority for the value of *systematic theology* in the Church.

Thus, then, we see that in the whole process of revelation the wisdom of God has made use of the fixed laws and the natural processes of the human mind. Knowing, as he does, far better than we do ourselves, what is necessary to bring mankind to a due appreciation of his own Divine will, he has instituted a series of means by which the world should be gradually awakened to a sense of heavenly and eternal realities. In this awakening all revelation *essentially* consists; and it is only when it has actually taken place that Christian theology is possible.

We may say, therefore, by way of conclusion, that revelation is a process of the intuitional consciousness, gazing upon eternal verities; while theology is the reflection of the understanding upon those vital intuitions, so as to reduce them to a logical and scientific expression.

Having thus determined the essential nature of revelation, and identified it with a particular form of intuition, we

shall, in conclusion, draw one or two inferences from the subject as it now presents itself to us.

1. We learn, that the development of our religious knowledge follows exactly the same law (so far as purely mental processes are concerned,) as do all the other branches of human research. To those who have studied the scientific methods of human investigation, as developed by Professor Whewell in his "Philosophy of Induction," it will be obvious that there are two spheres of mental activity always involved in the search after truth. There must be the acquisition of clear conceptions on the one side—there must be the logical processes of induction or deduction on the other. In the former of these, that is, in our conceptions, the whole extent of our knowledge on any particular subject is implicitly involved. It is these which mark the present extent of our actual experience, and fix the boundaries within which logical processes can be valid and fruitful. To get a definite and material advance in our knowledge on any subject, there must be a widening and a clearing of our conceptions themselves, as well as a farther application of inductive or deductive reasoning. To put the matter into other words, we are indebted to the power of *intuition* to furnish the essential *basis* of our knowledge upon every possible subject of scientific research; and it is only as the power of intuition increases, that logical appliances can be of any avail.

Thus, universally, the primary data of all branches, even of scientific truth, come to us by a direct and intuitional process; that is, using the word in its broad and generic sense, by an immediate revelation from God. The moulding of this revelation into the form of a scientific construction, is the work of the natural understanding operating upon the data thus furnished. Exactly, in the same way, does our religious knowledge come to us primarily, by a direct

revelation addressed to the intuitional faculty; while the work of constructing a formal theology is performed by using the same logical aids and appliances as are employed in every other branch of science whatever.

2. We infer, that the Bible cannot, in strict accuracy of language, be termed a revelation, since a revelation always implies an actual process of intelligence in a living mind; but it contains the records in which those minds who enjoyed the preliminary training, or the first brighter revelation of Christianity, have described the scenes which awakened their own religious nature to new life, and the high ideas and aspirations to which that new life gave origin. The actual revelation was not made primarily in the book, but in the mind of the writers; and the power which that book possesses of conveying a revelation to us, consists in its aiding in the awakenment and elevation of our religious consciousness; in its presenting to us a mirror of the history of Christ; in its depicting the intense religious life of his first followers; and in giving us *the letter* through which the spirit of truth may be brought home in vital experience to the human heart.

Christianity was revealed to the world long before the New Testament was written. Those for whom it was written had been already awakened to its great realities; so that to them it was but a description of that which already existed *vitally* in the Church. The real revelation, in a word, was made to their own hearts,—produced there by the agency of Christ's inspired messengers; but *the Word*, through God's wisdom and mercy, was written in order to be a lasting memorial, throughout all ages, of the life and teaching of Christ; and a representation of the first mighty influence of Spirit and truth upon the religious consciousness of humanity. The Bible, be it remembered, came forth from the minds of the writers; and it can only contain, in a verbal

statement, what already existed there as a living experience.

3. We remark, that the difference between revelation, considered in that broad generic sense in which it can be identified with the whole procedure of the intuitional faculty, and viewed in that specific sense in which it applies to Christian truth,—lies not at all in the subjective processes of the human mind, but in the special means employed by God to superinduce the highest spiritual intuitions at some particular period of the world. Intuition is at all times, subjectively, the same in its essential character, whatever be the concrete reality upon which we gaze: hence the whole *peculiarity*, in the case of the Christian revelation, centres in those Divine arrangements, through the medium of which the loftiest and purest conceptions of truth were brought before the immediate consciousness of the apostles, and, through them, of the whole age; at a time, too, when, in other respects, the most universal demoralization abounded on every side.

In reducing the idea of revelation, therefore, to the general category of intuition, we are not by any means intending to thrust away out of view the Divine agencies which were employed in introducing the *Christian revelation specifically* into the world. Our object has rather been to analyze what is included in the very conception of revelation itself, and to infer from thence what part of the process, through which the Christian consciousness was first awakened in the depths of man's nature, was strictly in accordance with the laws of the human spirit, and what part of it depended upon specific and Divine arrangements. The act of revelation itself we have found is always a case of pure intuition dimly mediated, and so far the process is altogether in accordance with the spiritual laws of man's nature; but the arrangements through which these particular objects were presented to the eye of the soul at that particular time, and the agencies by which its power of vision was strengthened first of all to behold

them,—these we cannot but attribute to a Divine plan, altogether distinct from the general scheme of Providence as regards human development. On this principle alone can we account for the outburst of heavenly light from the gross darkness and moral disorganization both of the Jewish and heathen world.

The state of mind, then, which we suppose to exist as consequent upon these special and Divine arrangements—a state in which there is involved an extraordinary and miraculous elevation of the religious consciousness of certain chosen individuals, for the express illumination of humanity at large,—this is what we designate by the term *inspiration*. Accordingly, this term, as including in it all that is specific and peculiar in the Christian revelation, will demand a separate consideration in our next chapter.

POSTSCRIPT TO CHAPTER V.

The history of the Idea of revelation presents in its various definitions a great intermingling of the natural and supernatural elements. In the earlier and apostolic periods the terms φανερουν and αποκαλυπτειν were used very generally in reference to any kind of Divine manifestation. Thus Paul uses them (Rom. i. 19) in reference to the revelation of the universe to the heathen: *Το γνωστον του Θεου φανερον εστιν εν αυτοις· ὁ Θεος γαρ αυτοις ἐφανερωσε.* It was Augustine who first brought the notion, through the great logical tendency of his mind, into a more defined and determinate form. Since that time the distinction between a *natural* and a *supernatural* revelation has been more or less current in all theological disquisitions.

The introduction of a more profound philosophical analysis in modern times, has again pointed to the fundamental element as being generically the same in all revelation of whatever kind; but just in proportion as the subjective processes have been made more prominent on the one side, or the objective occasions of them on the

other, has the idea of revelation presented a greater or a less degree of the supernatural, as necessarily attaching to it. Klein gives the following view of the question:—Revelation, he considers, is of two kinds—*universal* and *special*. Universal revelation is, first, outward, *i. e.*, given to us through external nature, or the providential circumstances of nations; and secondly, *inward*, made to us by the light of pure reason. Again, special revelation is, first, *immediate* or supernatural, as shown outwardly by such events as the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, or inwardly by direct mental illumination of inspired men; and secondly, mediate or natural, as shown *outwardly* by the Divine direction of outward circumstances, and inwardly by the gift of extraordinary talents.

This classification may be quite correct and useful, but it does not at all aid us in the philosophical comprehension of the subject. Of more purely philosophical definitions we shall present the following to the consideration of those who may be interested in the question:—

Twesten.—"Die Aeusserung der göttlichen Gnade, zum Heile der gefallenen Menschen in ihrer ürsprunglichen Wirkung auf die menschliche Erkenntniss." Fischer.—"Reale Einwerkung des göttlichen Wesens, auf das intelligible Wesen der Natur-causalitäten, wodurch ihr Wesen und ihre Kräfte eigentlich afficirt gesteigert wohl auch theilweise umgewandelt werden." De Wette.—"Der Glaube an Offenbarung est einestheiles nichts als die Anerkennung der unbedingten Wahrheit, oder des Zusammentreffens einer Erscheinung mit dem Urbild der Vernunft; andertheils die Anerkennung der unbedingten Freiheit in Hinsicht des Ursprungs." Bockshammer.—"Die natürliche fortwährende Gemeinschaft des menschlichen Geistes mit dem Göttlichen."

CHAPTER VI.

ON INSPIRATION.

It will be seen by the attentive reader, that we are proceeding in the present discussion from the subjective towards the more objective phenomena connected with the philosophy of religion. In the preceding chapter, we made our first transition from what was purely of a subjective character, that is, from the region of man's inward religious experience, to the more objective side of the question. Revelation, we saw, includes in its very idea both elements combined: it is a form of intelligence in which the subject comes immediately in contact with the object, and contemplates it in its concrete unity.

We have now to proceed one step further in the same objective direction. If Revelation, generically considered, involves an immediate intuition of Divine realities, then the *Christian* revelation, as one specific case of intuition, involves a perception of truths so great, so sublime, so elevated above the natural region of human contemplation, that their presentation can only be accounted for by the supposition of special arrangements for the purpose. All revelation, as we showed, implies two conditions; it implies, namely, an intelligible *object* presented, and a given power of recipiency in the subject; and in popular language, when speaking of the manifestation of Christianity to the world, we confine the term *revelation* to the former of these conditions, and appropriate the word *inspiration* to designate the latter.

According to this convenient distinction, therefore, we may say, that revelation, in the Christian sense, indicates that act of Divine power by which God presents the realities of the spiritual world immediately to the human mind; while inspiration denotes that especial influence wrought upon the faculties of the subject, by virtue of which he is able to grasp these realities in their perfect fulness and integrity. God made a revelation of himself to the world in Jesus Christ; but it was the inspiration of the apostles which enabled them clearly to discern it. Here, of course, the objective arrangements and the subjective influences perfectly blend in the production of the whole result; so that whether we speak of revelation or of inspiration, we are, in fact, merely looking at two different sides of that same great act of Divine beneficence and mercy, by which the truths of Christianity have been brought home to the human consciousness.

Revelation and inspiration, then, indicate one united process, the result of which upon the human mind is, to produce a state of spiritual intuition, whose phenomena are so extraordinary, that we at once separate the agency by which they are produced from any of the ordinary principles of human development. And yet this agency is applied in perfect consistency with the laws and natural operations of our spiritual nature. Inspiration does not imply any thing generically new in the actual processes of the human mind; it does not involve any form of intelligence essentially different from what we already possess; it indicates rather the elevation of the religious consciousness, and with it, of course, the power of spiritual vision, to a degree of intensity peculiar to the individuals thus highly favored by God. We must regard the whole process of inspiration, accordingly, as being in no sense *mechanical*, but purely *dynamical*: involving, not a novel and supernatural faculty, but a faculty,

already enjoyed, elevated *supernaturally* to an extraordinary power and susceptibility; indicating, in fact, an inward nature so perfectly harmonized to the Divine, so freed from the distorting influences of prejudice, passion, and sin, so simply recipient of the Divine ideas circumambient around it, so responsive in all its strings to the breath of heaven,—that truth leaves an impress upon it which answers perfectly to its objective reality. This being the theory respecting the nature of inspiration, which we are led to assume from the preceding analysis, we shall attempt in the present chapter to develope it more fully, and show its consistency with the whole phenomena of the case.

In order to do this the more satisfactorily, it will be necessary first of all to turn our attention to the *mechanical* view of the question, and point out some of the difficulties with which it is encumbered. There are various modes we know in which the mechanical idea of inspiration has been presented, and various grounds on which its accuracy has been pleaded. For example, the enjoyment of the gift of inspiration has been very frequently blended with the power of working miracles; and as this power evidently involves some capacity altogether new and supernatural, it has been tacitly assumed that inspiration presupposes the same thing.

Now, it is not our purpose at present to discuss the nature of miracles, philosophically considered, nor to decide precisely what was their object in the economy of Divine Providence: all we have to show is, that they have nothing *immediately* to do with inspiration; that miraculous powers, on the one side, are no positive proof of their agent being inspired; that inspiration, on the other side, is admitted to exist where no miraculous powers have been granted. For the proof of this, let us turn first to the Old Testament, and see how the case stands there.

We find mentioned in the history of the Jewish dispensation, not a few who had a Divine commission to perform cer-

tain actions, and were even intrusted with miraculous powers, who, nevertheless, were by no means *in-such-wise* the subjects of inspiration as to fit them for being infallible teachers. Take the single case of Aaron, who, at the very time that he was occupying an important post in the Hebrew economy by express commission from God, and was intrusted, as occasion required, with miraculous power, yet did not hesitate to lead the people astray by assisting them in the exercise of the grossest idolatry. The other fact, however, to which we referred, is still more to our present purpose—the fact, namely, that many who are universally acknowledged as inspired men, were never known to be possessed of any miraculous credentials. Such, for example, was the case with the authors of the historical books of the Old Testament: such was the case with David and Solomon; such was the case with Ezra, Nehemiah, and some of the later prophets. Miraculous powers they had *none*,—but they have ever been regarded as inspired men, whom God raised up and prepared to be the expositors of his will to the people.

The same remarks equally hold good with regard to those who were the prominent agents in the first establishment of Christianity in the world. Many there were, the recipients of supernatural gifts in those ages, whose teaching has never been regarded as *infallible* or inspired: while of the actual writers of the New Testament, some, at least, were never known to possess or exercise any kind of miraculous power whatever. On a general consideration of the whole case, therefore, it appears, that the one gift was not *necessarily* connected with the other; that miracles, while they evinced a Divine commission, did not prove the infallibility of the agent *as a teacher;* that they were, in fact, separate arrangements of Providence, each having its own purpose to perform, and each requiring a special capacity to perform them. The one demanded an extraordinary physical *power*—the

other a mental and moral *enlightenment;* and so little are these two qualities regarded in the Bible as vouchers for each other, that the former is often described as being exercised by evil men, and even by Satan himself. We have no reason, therefore (for this is our main conclusion), to identify inspiration with the mechanical influence granted to the agents of miraculous powers.

Another aspect in which the mechanical theory has been regarded, is that which supposes a special dictation of the actual words inscribed on the sacred page, distinct from the religious enlightenment of the writer. This theory of verbal dictation has been so generally abandoned by the thoughtful in the present day, that it is not necessary to recapitulate here the innumerable objections which crowd upon us as we proceed to deal with the details of manuscripts, various readings, translations, and the gradual formation of the Canon during the two first centuries of the Christian era. We shall merely state four considerations, which may be further thought out by the reader who wishes to inquire candidly into the question.

First. There is no *positive* evidence of such a verbal dictation having been granted. The supposition of its existence would demand a twofold kind of inspiration, each kind entirely distinct from the other. The apostles, it is admitted, were inspired to preach and to teach *orally;* but we have the most positive evidence that this commission did not extend to their very words. Often they were involved in minor misconceptions; and sometimes they taught specific notions inconsistent with a pure spiritual Christianity, as Peter did when he was chided by Paul. The verbal scheme, therefore, demands the admission of *one* kind of inspiration having been given to the apostles as men, thinkers, moral agents, and preachers, and another kind having been granted them as *writers*. We do not at present deny that this *was* the case; we merely ask, where is the *positive* evidence of it? has

such a *specific* mode of inspiration over and above the general commission they received as apostles ever existed, except in the imagination of theological speculators? To us it appears that the evidence is entirely theoretical, and that it has never yet been maintained on positive or historical grounds.

Secondly. The theory in question is rendered highly *improbable*, from the fact that we find a distinctive style maintained by each separate author. We do not affirm that this alone is decisive of the question, but we mean that it is a highly improbable and even extravagant supposition, without the most positive proof of it being offered, that each writer should manifest his own modes of thought, his own temperament of mind, his own educational influences, his own peculiar phraseology; and yet, notwithstanding this, every word should have been dictated to him by the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly. The theory in question tends to *diminish* our view of the *moral* and *religious* qualifications of the writers, by elevating the mere mechanical influence into absolute supremacy. In proportion as we possess a higher idea of the spiritual enlightenment of the apostles, in that proportion we feel that there was less need of any such verbal dictation as we are now considering. The writers of the Bible, on this theory, might have been mere tools or instruments—their *minds* need not have been inspired *at all;* on the contrary, if they were fitted as holy and inspired men to comprehend and propagate Christianity, they were also fitted to describe it either in oral or in written symbols.

Fourthly. The *positive* evidence against this theory—evidence which to a thoughtful mind amounts to a moral demonstration—lies here: that even if we suppose the letter of the Scripture to have been actually dictated, yet that *alone* would never have served as a revelation of Christianity to mankind, or obviated the necessity of an appeal from the letter to the spirit of the whole system. A revelation, we have shown, necessarily implies a direct intuition of Divine

things. The revelation of Christianity was made to man by a continued and specially designed process of influences and agencies. The types of Judaism, the person and history of the Saviour, the effusion of the Spirit, the life, labors, and teaching of the apostles,—all these conspired to *reveal* Christianity to the human mind. The penning of the sacred records was indeed *one* out of the many efforts they made to unfold the will of God to man; but these records, without the moral and spiritual life awakened in the souls of the converts, would have conveyed but dim and imperfect notions of the truth itself. And so it is *now*,—the letter of the Scripture has to be illuminated by the Spirit of Truth before it affords to any one a full manifestation of Christianity in its essence and its power; while in proportion to the varied spiritual condition of the reader, the conceptions attached to the mere words are almost infinitely diversified.

The reason why many have been so anxious to represent the *letter* of the Bible as inspired is, that there may be a *fixed standard* for truth in the world. They do not consider that the letter can never serve as a standard for the *spirit* of Christianity—that the two are altogether incommensurable—that the letter *alone*, in fact, never *has* secured the unity of the Church—but that the unity we so much yearn after comes only through the development of the religious *life*. This being the case, where is the value or the reasonableness of laying so great a stress upon the letter, when after all we *must* be brought, on any hypothesis, to one and the same conclusion, namely, that the Spirit of Truth, interpreted by Divine aid, and perceived through the awakened religious consciousness of true believers, is the real and essential revelation—the sole basis of Christian unity—the appeal to which we all in the end practically repair? Whether the words be dictated or not, there is, therefore, exactly the same necessity for another and spiritual appeal; which is, in fact,

nothing but affirming, in the spirit of our whole previous analysis, that as all revelation must be made to the intuitional faculty, mere material and logical appliances, whether in the form of writing or speaking, can only avail as *means* towards the realization of the great end implied in the idea of *a revelation from God.*

Instead, then, of maintaining a strained verbal theory of inspiration, which fails of the very purpose for which it was constructed, how much more consistent is it to look upon *the word,* as the natural and spontaneous expression of that Divine life which the inspired apostles received immediately from God. So far from destroying the canonical authority of the sacred writings by these principles, we are in fact establishing it upon a much firmer foundation; for the rule of faith and practice in the Scripture becomes far more tangible and positive when we look to the *spirit* of its doctrines and precepts, than when we look to the letter merely; and far better is it when we attempt from the New Testament to realize those first living conceptions of Christianity, which came fresh from the Divine life and spirit of the Saviour, than when we are weighing definitions, reconciling clauses, and building our views upon syntactical constructions.

A third form in which the mechanical idea of inspiration has been upheld, is that which asserts a *distinct commission* in respect to the authorship of each one of the sacred books now constituting the Canon of Scripture. Of the *authenticity* of most of the Scripture records, no one, we conceive, can entertain a reasonable doubt. The internal and external evidences, as well as the severest criticism of ages and centuries, alike demonstrate that these writings are *genuine*— that they were written under the circumstances they profess to have been; that they contain the most earnest thoughts of the authors; in fine, that they are the veritable result of a Divine inspiration. The question however still comes, ad-

mitting them to be genuine, and admitting them to be inspired,—what did the authors themselves in good faith mean to include under the notion of inspiration? Did they claim for themselves any distinct commission to pen the works in question? was such a commission at the time awarded to them? or was not the whole of the inspiration attaching to them rather viewed as resulting simply from the extraordinary intuitions of Divine truth which they had received, and which they were here impelled by a deep sense of their infinite value to depict?

The idea is entertained by many that a distinct commission to write was in every instance given to the sacred penmen by God; that each book came forth with a specific impress of Deity upon it; and that the whole of the Canon of Scripture was gradually completed by *so many distinct and decisive acts of Divine ordination*. Now the evidence of this opinion we regard as totally defective, and can only ascribe its growth and progress in the Church to the influence of a low and mechanical view of the whole question of inspiration itself.

Let any one look through the whole of the books composing the Old and New Testaments, and consider how many can lay claim to any *distinct* commission,—and consequently, how their inspiration can be at all defended *if it be made to rest upon this condition*. That Moses had a Divine commission to institute the Jewish theocracy, and to give both the moral and ceremonial law to the people, we do not doubt. But that does not prove any Divine commission to write the whole of the Pentateuch as we now have it. In fact, it is quite certain that Moses did *not* write the whole of it at all. There is, at least, a probability that the history of the creation was compiled from earlier documents or traditions; and as to the conclusion of this record, we well know that Moses could not possibly have penned the account of his own death

and burial. Added to this, it is by no means certain that "the book of the law," as occasionally referred to in Jewish history, was at all identical with the Pentateuch *as a whole*, which the best critics, in fact, have generally concurred in referring to a much later date. We do not by these remarks throw the slightest shade upon the inspired source of the Pentateuch ;—no book of Scripture, perhaps, has greater internal arguments to vindicate it. All we mean is, that the inspiration here involved did not spring from any outward commission to write that particular book ; but only from the Divine light which was granted to the age, and to the mind of the author—a gift which he was left to make use of as necessity or propriety might suggest.

If we pass on to the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles,—where, in any one of these cases, can we discover any specific Divine ordination that they should be written at all ? So far from finding this, the very authors are totally unknown: and all that we can say is, that they were universally received, both as veracious histories, and as containing correct religious sentiments, by the Jewish people. In like manner the date and the author of the Book of Job are highly problematical: it certainly seems attributable, however, to some writer living on the borders of Arabia, at or after the time of Solomon ; but we are quite at a loss to assign any other reason for its being received into the Jewish canon except the extraordinary religious value of its contents.

If we look, again, to the Psalms,—respecting the authorship of many of them we are altogether in ignorance ; and those which are undoubtedly to be ascribed to David, were evidently intended as sacred hymns and odes, some of them written for the Temple service, and others the natural outpourings of a mind at once devotional and poetic. We cannot find in any case that they were written by express com-

mission; all we can say is, that they embodied the religious consciousness, or, if the term be preferred, the state of *inspiration* to which the mind of the writer was elevated.

With regard to the prophetic writings, these certainly occupy a much higher position than the historical books, inasmuch as we learn that the authors actually received a prophetic commission to declare the counsels of God to the people; but this does not necessarily involve any distinct and separate commission to *write* the books in question,—nor have we any reason to regard their writings as inspired in any other sense than as being the rescript of their inward prophetic consciousness. In this way the unitary conception we have given of inspiration, as regards the whole of the Old Testament, is fully preserved.

Passing from the Old Testament to the New, the same entire absence of any distinct commission given to the writers of the several books (with the exception, perhaps, of the Apocalypse of John), presents itself. Mark and Luke were not apostles; and the latter of them distinctly professes to write from the testimony of eye-witnesses, and to claim the confidence of Theophilus, for whom his two treatises were composed, *on this particular ground.*

Matthew and John wrote their accounts somewhat far in the first century, when the increase of the Christian converts naturally suggested the necessity of some such statements, at once for their information and for their spiritual requirements generally. Finally, Paul, as we know, wrote his letters as the state of particular churches seemed to call for them; but in no case do we find a *special commission* attached to any of these or of the other epistles of the New Testament.

Added to this, the light which history sheds upon the early period of the Christian Church shows us that the writings which now compose the New Testament Canon, were

not at all regarded as express messages to them from God, independently of the conviction they had of the high integrity and spiritual development of the minds of the writers. They received them just as they received the oral teachings of the apostles and evangelists; they read them in the churches to supply the place of *their* personal instructions; and there is abundant evidence that *many other writings* beside those which now form the New Testament were read with a similar reverence, and for a similar edification.*

It was only gradually, as the pressure of heresy compelled it, that a certain number of writings were agreed upon by general consent as being *purely apostolic*, and designated by the term *homologoumena*, or agreed upon. But that much contention existed as to which should be acknowledged canonical, and which not, is seen from the fact that a number of the writings now received were long termed "antilegomena," or contested; and that the third century had well nigh completed its course before the *present Canon* was fixed by universal consent. All this shows us that it was not any distinct commission attached to the composition of certain books or documents which imparted a Divine authority to the apostles' writings, but that they were selected and approved by the Church itself as being veritable productions of men "who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"—men who were not inspired *in order* to write any precise documents, but who wrote such documents, amongst other labors, by virtue of their being inspired.

The conclusion which we necessarily draw from these considerations is, that the canonicity of the New Testament Scriptures was decided upon, solely on the ground of their presenting to the whole Church clear statements of *apostoli-*

* See Olshausen's "Proof of the Genuineness of the Writings of the New Testament," chap. I.

cal Christianity. The idea of their being written by any special command of God or verbal dictation of the Spirit, was an idea altogether foreign to the primitive Churches. They knew that Christ was in himself a Divine revelation; they knew that the apostles had been with him in his ministry; they knew that their hearts had been warmed with his truth, that their whole religious nature had been elevated to intense spirituality of thinking and feeling by the possession of his Spirit, and that this same Spirit was poured out without measure upon the Church. Here it was they took their stand; and in these facts they saw the reality of the apostolic inspiration; upon these realities they reposed their faith, ere ever the sacred books were penned; and when they *were* penned they regarded them as valid representations of the living truth which had already enlightened the Church, and as such alone pronounced upon their canonical and truly apostolic character.

We have thus attempted to show that the proper idea of inspiration, as applied to the Holy Scriptures, does not include either miraculous powers, verbal dictation, or any distinct commission from God; we have only to recur, therefore, to the definition already proposed, which regards inspiration as consisting in the impartation of clear intuitions of moral and spiritual truth to the mind by extraordinary means. According to this view of the case, inspiration, *as an internal phenomenon*, is perfectly consistent with the natural laws of the human mind—it is a higher potency of a certain form of consciousness, which every man to some degree possesses. The supernatural element consists in the *extraordinary influences* employed to create these lofty intuitions, to bring the mind of the subject into a perfect harmony with truth, and that, too, at a time when under ordinary circumstances such a state could not possibly have been enjoyed. The personal experience of the life, preaching, character, sufferings, death, and

resurrection of Christ, together with the remarkable effusion of spiritual influence which followed his ascension, were assuredly most extraordinary instrumentalities, wonderfully adapted, morever, to work upon the minds of the apostles, and raise them to a state of spiritual perception and sensibility, such as has never been fully realized at any other period in the world's history. It was these minds, thus prepared, who first founded and instructed the Church; and the New Testament Scriptures were written long after Christianity had established itself, and after thousands had been brought under its power, in order to represent, and so far as possible *to retain*, the bright impressions of apostolic men, after they should have passed away to their eternal rest.

In confirmation of this view respecting the nature of inspiration, we offer the following remarks:—

1. That it alone gives full *consistency* to the *progressive* character of the Scripture morality. Had we observed in the Bible only a regular development of certain religious truths and doctrines which were at first merely *hinted at*, but gradually evolved into their full spiritual import, we could easily have accounted for all this, even on the scheme of verbal inspiration itself. We should have seen in it the wisdom and condescension of God adapting truth to the weaker states of the human intellect; and such wisdom, in fact, *we do* see in the whole of the typical character of the Jewish dispensation. But when we come to moral laws, conceptions, and principles, there we must look for an entire absence of all impurity and imperfection in every thing which comes from the immediate dictation of the Holy Spirit. It certainly would involve an idea highly revolting to our best moral and religious sensibilities, to suppose that an impure or imperfect morality—one frequently at variance with Christian principles—could *at any time* have come directly and verbally to us from the lips of a holy God. And yet such

an imperfect morality is plainly discernible throughout the period of the Old Testament dispensation, and frequently embodied, too, in the Old Testament Scriptures. The fierce spirit of warfare, the law of retaliation, the hatred of enemies, the curses and imprecations poured upon the wicked, the practice of polygamy, the frequent indifference to deception to compass any desirable purposes, the existence of slavery, the play, generally speaking, given to the stronger passions of our nature,—all these bespeak a tone of moral feeling far below that which Christianity has unfolded. These things, it is said, may be explained as being *permitted* by God for a time, on account of the weakness of human nature, or, as our Saviour expressed it on one occasion, "on account of the hardness of their hearts." But surely it is one thing to suppose that God would *tolerate* these things, just as he tolerates *sin* in his creatures, while the struggle against evil is going on, and quite another thing to have them either justified or spoken of as matters of moral indifference, in *words* dictated immediately by the Holy Spirit.

These moral phenomena, however, which, on the ordinary hypothesis concerning the inspiration of the Old Testament, are, to say the least, in the highest degree strange and perplexing, all appear perfectly natural, and even *necessary*, in connection with the views we have taken. We regard the Jewish economy as a Divine and miraculous dispensation; we see in it God interposing to rescue the world from idolatry and crime; we see him selecting a peculiar people to be the repository of truth and the instrument of his gracious purposes; we see him propounding to them a moral and a ceremonial law, hedging them in with institutions, to keep them distinct from the heathen nations, and impressing upon them by means of prophets, to whom were granted special intuitions of spiritual truth, the great fundamental ideas of man's religion as a sinner and a penitent. From all this

naturally resulted a course of moral education. God, who had chosen his people for himself and given them laws, was ever with them: his providence, his communion with the prophets, his Spirit reflecting heavenly light from the symbols and sacrifices of their faith—all cherished in the minds of the more thoughtful and pious *a religious life*, which manifested itself in the struggle against evil, in the resistance of human passion, in the spread of clearer intuitions of Divine things, in the realization of a purer morality and a purer worship. In the Old Testament we have this life unfolded to us both collectively, in the history of the nation, and individually, in the devout utterances of holy men. We see their religious consciousness, as it were, *dissected* and portrayed:—there are its excellencies and its defects; there its struggles with evil, and its aspirations after truth; there the course of its development from age to age; there, in a word, the spirit of humanity, on its pathway to Christian light and love. If the Jewish dispensation was Divine, if God communed in secret with the nation, if his Spirit was in the Church, then the writings which embody this religious state *are inspired*,—inspired, however, not as being penned under any specific commission from heaven, but as being the productions of those who were enlightened by special influences, and as being universally received by the Jews as the purest representations both of their national and their individual religious vitality. In such representations of course we could not expect to see described a *higher religion* or a more perfect morality than *actually existed* in those times; hence, accordingly, the imperfections both in moral and religious ideas which are mixed up more or less with all their sacred writings.

II. The view we have taken of the nature of inspiration is the only one which gives a satisfactory explanation of the minor discrepancies to be found in the sacred writings. As

we are attempting here merely to state *principles*, with as much brevity as possible, and not to enter at large into details, we cannot pretend to discuss and demonstrate the particular *cases* of discrepancy to which reference is now made, but shall base our remarks upon those which are pretty generally acknowledged by all parties.

Under this head we may refer to the acknowledged discrepancies between some of the Scriptural statements and scientific truth. The account of the creation, for example, as given in the Book of Genesis, is by no means easily reconcilable (*viewed as a scientific account*) with the most palpable facts of geology. We do not doubt, but that ingenuity may smooth down one expression, and give a broad meaning to another, and after all may bring out a tolerable case of consistency; but still it is impossible to say, that *as a scientific view of the creation of the world, the book of Genesis would convey at all the same impression to the mind of any ordinary reader, as do the results of geological research.* As a *moral* account of it, there it stands palpable and plain;—there is God, the infinite agent; there is his power, creating and fashioning the whole of the realm of nature; there is his Spirit, breathing on the void and making it pregnant; there is *man*, created holy and happy; there is sin, marring his bliss, and the earth becoming *cursed* through the commission of evil. All this is clear enough; and is it not far better, more satisfactory, more devout, to recognize a Divine inspiration in the theistic and other religious conceptions of the mind by which these early records were penned, than to be ever striving after a *scientific accuracy*, which at best must be very dim and imperfect? Admit that scientific explanations, in order to be at all intelligible to the early ages, must have been couched in the language of the times; yet it is not very reverent to suppose the Spirit of God to dictate explanations of natural phenomena, which must be positively

worthless as scientific statements, until they are expounded over again by human research. Let us but regard inspiration, however, as being essentially a development of living intuitions of moral and spiritual truth,—let us view the Old Testament as representing this state of mind, and we are by no means disconcerted by all the scientific doubts which may be thrown on the words of Scripture. Nay, we see that imperfection on these matters was *inevitable;* and yet, with all these imperfections, we cast the whole matter before the skeptic, and we defy him to throw the least shade over the internal evidences we have that every element for which the Bible is of any value to us, is *Divine*.

We remark again in some parts of the Bible discrepancies in the statement of *facts*.

The four narratives of the life and history of Christ give us a favorable opportunity of testing this particular case. Regarded as so many representations of the Divinest character which ever appeared in human flesh, these four Gospels stand before us in all their sublime unity and simplicity. No such conception was ever before developed—no such ideal character ever entered into the creations of poetry—no such Divine perfection, combined with human sympathy, has elsewhere appeared, which bears the slightest comparison with these united statements of the evangelic historians. There we see their unity, their inspiration, their moral power, their heavenly mission. What need we further? Does it make any difference whether a woman anointed the head of Jesus in the house of Simon or of Lazarus? Does it signify whether Christ raised a dead man to life coming in or going out of such a town or city? Does the imperfect recollection or misstatement of a mere indifferent incident make any difference in the Divinity of the religious ideas embodied in the narrative?

Allow as many of such minor discrepancies as you please,

it proves the *honesty* of the writers more than it detracts from the Divinity of the history; and admitting the inspiration of those writers to be what we have stated, we gain *all* the advantage of the one, without suffering the slightest shade to obscure our faith from the other. Surely *they* must have but a feeble conception of what these wondrous narratives really are, who feel that any *verbal* differences can obscure a single ray of the Divine light which flashes from them at every page.

Once more, we may refer to discrepancies in reasoning, in definition, and in other purely formal and logical processes. By those who have most closely analyzed the trains of thought which we have in the apostolic writings, and especially those of St. Paul, it is well understood how great the difficulty often is to reconcile particular definitions, and passing arguments, with logical order and consistency. To some it might, doubtless, seem very irreverent to speak of errors in reasoning as occurring in the sacred writings; but the irreverence, if there be any, really lies on the part of those who deny their possibility. We have already shown that to speak of logic, as such, being inspired, is a sheer absurdity. The process either of defining or of reasoning requires simply the employment of the formal laws of thought, the accuracy of which can be in no way affected by any amount of inspiration whatever. Reasoning always implies the appeal which one mind makes to another upon data common to both, and presupposes that the process is one equally *rational* and patent to the comprehension of each of the parties. To aver that such processes of reasoning are infallible or inspired, or any thing else, indeed, except processes of reasoning based upon the common principles of our intellectual nature, either implies a practical deception in *apparently* appealing to reason while the whole matter is *really* one of authority; or, at any rate, indicates that these logical pro-

cesses, to which any sound, reasoning mind is perfectly competent, were constrained by a supernatural influence, so that they should have one ground of accuracy in appearance, and another, *de facto*, in the Divine constraint. In brief, in whatever way we suppose the fact of inspiration to apply to the formal understanding or to the ordinary laws of reasoning, we involve ourselves in difficulties and absurdities for which there is no compensation whatever in the value of the theory itself. Where inspiration is of inestimable importance, and even of supreme necessity, there let us recognize its sublime influence; but where it can neither give any certitude, nor guard against any errors which an accurate thinker could not detect for himself, it is merely trifling with the Divine gifts to extend their influence into these regions of our mental activity.

Accordingly, if we must, at any rate, admit, that in questions of formal reasoning inspired men were left to the natural working of their own faculties, we find no difficulty whatever in accounting for any logical incompleteness they may evince in the conduct of any regular piece of argumentation; nor should we, on the very same principles, even *expect* them to exhibit a uniform perfection in defining their ideas, in linking them together with logical propriety, or in preserving a perfect formal consistency through all their parts. To suppose that we should gain the slightest advantage, even were all this logical propriety to be observed, implies an entire misapprehension of what a revelation really is, and of what is the sole method by which it is possible to construct a valid theology. An actual revelation can only be made to the *intuitional* faculty, and a valid theology can only be constructed by giving a formal expression to the intuitions thus granted.

What, therefore, if Paul had never studied Aristotle; what if Peter, and James, and John were unskilled in the

categories and all the mysteries of the syllogism, does that render their deep intuitions of spiritual things of less avail? Admit those intuitions to be pure, holy, divine, and they were sure to manifest themselves in such a way as to come home to the hearts and consciences of mankind; neither is their excellence, their authority, or their power, at all marred by the fact, that the logical understanding was left to the operation of its own laws, and sometimes exhibited those imperfections to which all men are more or less liable. We know well that Peter reasoned very perversely about the circumcision, and that Paul at once vanquished him in argument, and reproved him for his error; and thus universally we find, that while the deeper nature of these inspired teachers was brought into wonderful harmony with Divine truth, and their spiritual vision vastly enlarged, yet they were left in all the lower and formal processes of the understanding to work their way onwards by the aid rendered to them by the natural laws of logic and the principles of common sense.

To sum up these remarks upon discrepancies, we should say, that all such matters of verbiage, of memory, of mere judgment, of logic,—have nothing whatever to do with inspiration, or prove any thing respecting the canonicity of a book, one way or the other. Inspiration, we repeat, depends upon the clearness, force, and accuracy of man's religious intuitions. Where these are of that extraordinary character which appeared in the men who lived with Christ upon earth, and received a double portion of his Spirit as apostles and martyrs for the truth, *there* we see the unquestionable evidence of a real inspiration; and the writings emanating from such men, when acknowledged by the universal Church, become essentially *canonical*, as being valid exhibitions of apostolical Christianity in its spirit and its power.

III. This leads us to another remark, namely, that the theory of inspiration, we maintain, alone explains the forma-

tion of the canon of Scripture, and the facts connected with it.

With regard to the Old Testament canon, very little can be said. Here the facts are almost all *negative*. We can easily enumerate what we do *not* know of its formation, but it is very hard to say what we do. With few exceptions, there is not an *entire* book in the whole of the Old Testament, with respect to which we can determine, with complete accuracy, who was the author,—when it was written,—at what time received into the canon of Scripture,—and on what especial grounds. The sum and substance of our certain knowledge (leaving out mere Jewish traditions) is, that the different books were collected together some time after the Babylonish captivity, accepted by the Jews as Divine writings, and read, accordingly, in the synagogues.

Now, under such circumstances as these, how are we to stand forth and maintain the inspiration of the Jewish writings on the hypothesis, either that they were all dictated by the Spirit of God, or written by express commission from Heaven? Only let it be affirmed in the outset, that *either* of these notions is *necessary* to complete the conditions of a truly inspired book, and what chance have we of being successful in proving the inspiration of the Old Testament agains the aggressions of the skeptic?

The fact upon which many lay such remarkable stress, that Christ and his apostles honored the Old Testament, is nothing to the purpose, as far as the *nature* of their inspiration is concerned. They honored the *Divine* and the *Eternal* in the old dispensation. They honored the men who had been servants and prophets of the Most High. They honored the writings from which their spirit of piety and of power breathed forth. But never did they affirm the *literal* and special divinity of all the national records of the Jewish theocracy, as preserved and read in the synagogues of that day.

And why, in the name of truth, should we attempt to affix to these records a commission and an authority which they never claim for themselves? Why should we encompass the notion of inspiration with conditions which we can never make good? Why should we involve ourselves in the obligation of defending things the most indefensible, when, after all, we get no advantage by it? *I know* that I am speaking the conviction of many learned men and devout Christians, when I say, that the blind determination to represent every portion of the Old Testament as being alike written entirely under the guidance of God, and by the special direction of the Spirit, has been one of the most fearful hinderances which ever stood in the way of an honest, firm, and rational belief in the reality of a Divine inspiration at all.

The moment, however, we pass from this mechanical idea of inspiration to that living idea of it which we now maintain, the whole aspect of the matter is changed. It is of little consequence for us *now* to know who were the authors of the works in question, when they were written, or when received into the canon of Scripture. *There they stand before us*, their own witnesses to the truth. The wondrous symbols of the ceremonial law; the miraculous history of the Jewish people; the whole Divine constitution of the Jewish theocracy; the sublime devotion of the Psalms; the struggles we observe in the Book of Job and the writings of Solomon, to prove the mysteries of human life and destiny; the prophetic visions of the ancient seers;—all these appear surrounded by a halo of Divine glory which nothing can obscure. These things, be it observed, present us with *facts*,—facts in the religious life of a people,—facts in the progress of the human mind towards a loftier view, which speak aloud *for themselves*. Who can deny them? There they are, actually embodied in these ancient records; all speaking of an unwearied Providence, and all manifesting the special purposes of Divine love.

Herein lies their inspiration: in this sense, and in this alone, can we maintain our hold on the Old Testament canon, as a spiritual and Divine reality, profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

If we pass from the Canon of the Old, to the formation of that of the New Testament, we get at once into a region that is far more clearly enlightened by the veritable facts of history. We may concentrate the most significant of these facts in a few brief sentences. We know that Christ chose and commissioned twelve apostles to proclaim his doctrine to the world; that after the ascension they enjoyed a special outpouring of the Spirit for the purpose on the day of Pentecost; that this special impartation of the Spirit, however, while it gave them clear intuitions of Divine things, did not absolutely preserve them from *all* error; that the whole scheme of Christianity dawned in fact but gradually on their minds; that they often consulted together respecting sentiments and usages, whether they were to be maintained or not; that sometimes the minor errors of one were counteracted by the influence of another; that these uncertainties in the logical statement of doctrines, however, did not prevent their deep perception of Divine realities from telling mightily upon the world; and that the result was to gather communities together, bound to each other in the common sympathy they felt for truth and love to God. We know still further, that the early Churches depended *entirely* upon the living teaching of the apostles and those instructed by them, for their *first conceptions* of Christianity; that as occasions suggested, some of the apostles and first evangelists, who travelled with them, wrote down their accounts of the life of Christ, as eye-witnesses, or as instructed by those who were; that as the wants of Churches arose, letters were written to them by some of the apostles, in order to impart knowledge, comfort, rebuke, or exhortation; that in

the course of the first and second century, many other letters were addressed to various Churches from good men and pastors, as well as from the apostles themselves, all of which were held in great estimation, and frequently read in the public assemblies. We know, moreover, that as heresies and false doctrines arose, it became more and more *necessary* to bring the apostolic doctrines to a definite statement; that for this purpose there grew up a separation of all the early Christian literature into a class of books which were considered decidedly *apostolical*, and others which were regarded as apocryphal; that much discussion arose as to which should be finally adopted as belonging to the former; and that at length, about the end of the second century or beginning of the third, the whole collection we now possess was made, and the Canon brought into its present form.

Such are the principal facts of the case. What may we then infer from them, and what may we not? Certainly we *cannot* infer that any one of these books was written by an *express* commission from God. We *cannot* infer that they are *verbally* inspired, any more than were the oral teachings of the apostles. We *cannot* infer that they had any greater authority attached to them than the general authority which was attached to the apostolic office. We cannot infer that they were regarded by the early Christians as being *the Word of God*, in any other sense than as being the productions of those who lived with Christ, were witnesses of his history, and were imbued with his Spirit; as being, in a word, veritable representations of a religious life which they had derived by a special inspiration from heaven.

On the other hand, we *can* infer from the whole history of the case, that the selection and juxtaposition of the New Testament books as a body of apostolic teaching was left to the religious sense, the Christian zeal, and historical honesty of the early Churches; that the authority claimed

for them was that attaching itself *generally* to the apostolic office; that the various writings are, according to the best historical evidence, perfectly authentic; that they contain a clear representation of that Divine truth with which the apostles conquered the world; and that, as such, they are inspired in the highest and truest sense. If it be said, that the providence of God *must* have watched over the composition and construction of a canonical book, which was to have so vast an influence on the destiny of the world,—we are quite ready to admit and even ourselves to assert it. But in the same sense Providence watches over every other event which bears upon the welfare of man, although the execution of it be left to the *freedom* of human endeavor.

And what, after all, *need* we in the Scriptures more than this? Why should we be perpetually craving after a stiff, literal, verbal infallibility? Christianity consists not in propositions—it is a life in the soul; its laws and precepts are not engraven on stone, they can only be engraven on the fleshy tables of the heart. The most precise words could never convey a clear religious conception to an unawakened mind; no logical precision of language and definition, on the other hand, is needed in order to awaken up intuitions which convey more by a single flash of the inward eye, than a whole body of divinity of most approved order and arrangement could *ever* teach. The Divine authority of the New Testament, in this view, becomes a *living reality*. It contains the conceptions of men who lived and walked with Christ; who drank at the fountain-head of truth; whose religious consciousness was awakened and elevated by special and extraordinary agencies; who must be regarded, therefore, as coming nearer to the mind of Christ than any other men can do to the end of time. Hence those minds possessed *a canonical authority* for the succeeding Church: they give us the first clear impressions from the Divine Antitype; they

appear all fresh from the heavenly mould; and our highest wisdom as Christians is, first to get our minds into the closest communion with them, as it regards the real elements of Divine truth, and then to develope those elements by all the light which succeeding ages will afford.

We have thus expounded the theory of inspiration that naturally results from the philosophical principles we had previously established with regard both to psychology and revelation. In order, moreover, to verify this theory, we have not only shown its consistency with the facts of the case, but given reasons for believing that those facts are inexplicable on any other principles. In conclusion, we shall briefly point to the analogy which the phenomena of inspiration bear to the higher workings of human genius—an analogy so close, that some men have gone so far as to identify them with one another.

So far as inspiration consists in an exalted state of man's intuitional faculties, there is undoubtedly a *resemblance*, generically considered, between inspiration in the Scriptural sense, and what are sometimes denominated the inspirations of genius. Genius, as we regard it, consists in the possession of a remarkable power of intuition with reference to some particular object; a power which arises from the inward nature of a man being brought into unusual harmony with that object in its reality and its operations. The natural philosopher manifests his genius, not by his power of analysis and verification, but by seizing distant analogies, by ascending with a sudden leap to general conceptions, by embodying his inward ideas in some theory or hypothesis which forms the basis and gives the direction to inductive investigation. It is, in fact, the harmony of his being with nature in her wondrous operations, which enables him to grasp those *conceptions*, on the accuracy of which all scientific research so much depends; this harmony manifesting itself in that in-

creased power of intuition, by which truth is seen in the concrete previous to its being verified by a legitimate induction. In the same manner does the poet of human life and destiny, by an elevation of mind above the influence of prevailing opinions, and a deep inward sympathy with human existence in its nature and development, unfold in spontaneous flashes of spiritual light the most secret workings of the mind and heart of humanity. Artistic genius is generically of the same order. It is the immediate realization of an ideal beauty which it strives to express in an outward form.

In affirming that the inspiration of the ancient seers and the chosen apostles was analogous with these phenomena, we are in no way diminishing its heavenly origin, or losing sight of the supernatural agency by which it was produced. We are only affirming what is constantly done in the case of outward miracles themselves—that God employs natural means whenever it is possible to do so, in order to accomplish even his supernatural purposes. The power of intuition in its pure and integral state, would imply a direct and complete recipiency of truth whenever presented to the mind. Let there be a due purification of the moral nature, —a perfect harmony of the spiritual being with the mind of God,—a removal of all inward disturbances from the heart, and what is to prevent or disturb this immediate intuition of Divine things? And what do we require in inspiration more than this, or what can more certainly assure us of its heavenly origin? So far from detracting aught from its reality or its authority, the whole fact now becomes, on the contrary, replete with a new moral interest. Not only do we now comprehend its nature; not only do we feel its real sublimity; not only does it rise from a mere mechanical force to a phenomenon instinct with spiritual grandeur;—but we are likewise taught, that in proportion as our own hearts are purified, and our own nature brought into harmony with truth,

we may ourselves indefinitely approach the same elevation. "Blessed are the pure in heart," said our Saviour, "for they shall *see* God."

Would that the whole idea of inspiration were thus brought as a moral power to bear upon the progress of the Christian Church; would that the unity of the Church were placed, not in the deadness of the letter, but in the higher realization of the Spirit of the truth. Then, at length, should we see the dawn of a brighter day, when the essence would be placed before the symbol—the living before the dead—and when the Gospel would come to us, not in *word* only, but in demonstration of the Spirit and in power.

POSTSCRIPT TO CHAPTER VI.

In the palmy days of the Catholic Church, the idea of inspiration in its most mechanical form was attached to the Church itself; and consequently very little stress was laid upon the inspiration of the Scriptures, which were for the most part thrown altogether into the background. When, however, the Reformers threw off the Papal yoke, and disowned the Church, they naturally fell back upon the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, as their most powerful appeal. Hence the Protestant Church, which had naturally inherited somewhat of the mechanical spirit of the Papacy, was nurtured in those rigid ideas of inspiration, by which alone it was able, in those times, to hold up an antagonistic authority to the pretended infallibility of the Papal See. The professed theologians of almost all the Reformed Churches accordingly developed and maintained the doctrine of verbal inspiration with great tenacity. Gerhard and the Buxtorfs went so far as to affirm the inspired authority even of the vowel points,—an opinion which was even confirmed by the Helvetic Confession of 1675. The notion of verbal inspiration was not only held by several of the early theologians of the Lutheran Church, but by many more of the writers who came in the Calvinistic branch of the

Protestant theology, and has even lingered amongst those most remarkable for literal, formal, and mechanical views, particularly in Scotland, down to the present day.

The prevalence of these extreme mechanical views, however, began to diminish very sensibly during the last century. Even Calixtus and Carpzovius in their time had swerved very considerably from this theory, and confined the notion of inspiration to the idea of spiritual assistance and direction in the composition of the sacred books,—an assistance which made the authors perfectly cognizant of the truth they were commissioned to write, and a direction which preserved them absolutely from all error. This modified view of the mechanical theory by degrees shaped itself into the opinions which have been commonly held by the more moderate orthodox divines of this country, who have generally parcelled out the idea of inspiration into three or four subordinate species, such as the inspiration of suggestion, of direction, of superintendence, &c., according to the religious contents of the different books of the Bible.

So far back, however, as the age of Doderlein, this view of the question began to appear very unsatisfactory; at any rate we find that admirable theologian hinting at another principle,—that namely, which confines the notion of inspiration to the *religious elements* of the Bible. He says (vol. i. p. 70), "Non est dubium, quin *omnia capita religionis* ad spiritum sanctum referri debeant; atque quum ejus institutio qualis cumque tandem fuerit (nam modum ejus definire difficillimum videtur) divina esset, divina jure habeantur." Augusti, in his Institutes (p. 89), expresses the same idea still more distinctly:—"Schränkt man die Theopneustie zunächst auf die fundamentale Glaubens-Artickeln ein, so entgeht man den Schwierigkeiten, welche sich sonst bei der einen oder andern Erklarungsart darbieten." So also Baumgarten, and so also, to some extent, that admirable scholar and theologian, Dr. J. P. Smith, in one of the notes to his "Scripture Testimony to the Messiah," a note which had almost brought out the controversy fairly into this country, but that its hour was not yet arrived.

The introduction of a more profound method of philosophical thinking into Germany, brought with it a more thorough analysis of the idea of inspiration, as a phenomenon presented to us in connec-

tion with the teaching of the apostles. From this period inspiration began to be regarded as a quality of the *minds* of the apostles, and as being applicable only in a secondary sense to their *writings*. This is clearly expressed by Bretschneider:—"Es ist zur sichern Fortpflanzung und zum Gebrauch der Offenbarung nichts weiter nöthig als dass der Codex der Offenbarung von Männern geschrieben sei, welche göttlichen Unterricht aus *reiner* und *erster* Quelle, empfangen hatten, nicht aber dass der Codex selbst ein Werk Gottes sei." To find, however, the most profound analysis of the idea of inspiration, we must go to the school of Schleiermacher, a school so immeasurably more fertile than any other in the elucidation of the deeper elements of man's spiritual nature. Schleiermacher himself puts the subject in this clear and striking point of view:—"Die einzelnen Bücher des neuen Testaments sind von dem Heiligen Geiste eingegeben, und die Sammlung derselben ist unter Leitung des Heiligen Geistes entstanden. Die eigentliche apostolische Eingebung ist nicht etwas den Neutestamentischen Büchern ausschliessend zukommendes; sondern diese participiren nur daran und die Eingebung in diesem engern Sinne, wie sie durch die Reinheit und Vollständigkeit der apostolischen Auffassung des Christenthums bedingt ist, erstreckt sich so weit als die von dieser ausgehende amtliche Apostolische Wirksamkeit." Twesten, the successor in the chair of Schleiermacher at Berlin says:—"Inspiration als Ableitung der Heiligen Schrift aus göttlicher Causalität, hängt zusammen mit dem allgemeinen christlichen Selbstbewusstsein, das nur ursprünglicher, und vollkommener war bei den ersten Vermittlern der Offenbarung." Nitzsch in like manner identifies the inspiration which attaches to the *writings* of the apostles with that which attached to their *preaching;* and Tholuck, in his "Commentary on the Hebrews," expresses himself thus:—"Wir nehmen bei den Apostlen *einen religiösen Takt* an, welcher sie leitete von den Bildungselementen ihrer Zeit und ihres Volks nur dasjenige beizubehalten, was den Vortrag der Christlichen Wahrheit materiel in Keiner Weise trübte, anderes aber zurücktreten, oder ganz fallen zu lassen. Man wird an dem Ausdrucke religiösen Takt keinen Anstoss nehmen; wir bedienen uns ja des Ausdrucks Takt, auch auf dem Gebiete der Kunst für die empfundene, aber nicht in das

Bewusstsein getretene Regel." Hase, to whom I am chiefly indebted for pointing out most of the above definitions, sides entirely with this school:—"Weil die Offenbarung *nur das Religiöse* betrifft, so ist in dieser Hinsicht die Lehre der Neukirchlichen Dogmatiker aufzunehmen, dass sich die Inspiration nur auf dieses im Weitesten Umfange beziehe; denn Christus ist nicht erchienen allerlei Kunst und Wissenschaft zu lehren, sondern unsre Seele zu retten."

Indications that this higher and far more impressive view of inspiration is making some progress in our own country are not wanting. The mental struggles of John Sterling showed how earnestly he desired to see the whole subject placed upon its true foundation,—a desire which was fostered by the influence of Coleridge, and the perusal of his "Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit." Equally, too, does the learned biographer of Sterling manifestly sympathize in the same desire:—"We have seen," he says, (p. cxxx.), "how Sterling grew to regard an intelligent theory of inspiration, and of the relation between the Bible and the faith which it conveys, as the most pressing want of the Church. *That it is a most pressing one is indeed certain, and such it has long been acknowledged to be, by those who meditate on theology.*" As a commentary upon these words, I shall merely refer to a note presented to us in another place by the same author, in which he quotes the following passage from Akermann:—"Theologians have not unfrequently been guilty of gross error with regard to the biblical idea of inspiration, from looking upon it as mechanical instead of dynamical. From the passages cited (Gen. xli. 38; Job xxxii. 8; Isa. xi. 2; Matt. x. 20; Luke ii. 40; John xiv. 17, 26; Rom. viii. 16; 1 Cor. ii. 10, xii. 3; Gal. iv. 6; 2 Pet. i. 21), it is sufficiently evident that the Bible speaks of the working of the Spirit of God as dynamical. Hence theologians ought never to have adopted or encouraged the crude notion, that persons under inspiration were like so many drawers, wherein the Holy Ghost put such and such things, which they then took out as something ready made, and laid before the world; so that their recipiency with reference to the Spirit inspiring them was like that of a letter-box. Whereas inspiration, according to the Bible, is to be viewed *as a vivifying and animating operation on the spiritual faculty of man*, by which its energy and

capacity are extraordinarily heightened, so that his powers of internal perception discern things spread out before them clearly and distinctly, which at other times lay beyond his range of vision, and were dark and hidden."—Hare's "Mission of the Comforter." *Appendix*, p. 500.

CHAPTER VII.

ON CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

In the whole of our previous discussions, we have been occupied exclusively with phenomena that belong to the intuitional part of our mental constitution. The *essential* elements of religion in general, as of Christianity in particular, appertain strictly to this portion of our nature, and may be realized in all their varied influence without the co-operation of any purely reflective processes. Revelation and inspiration, in like manner, both belong to the region of intuition; for although the analysis of them led us to the necessary admission of certain external influences and special providential arrangements, yet we have viewed even these, as yet, *only* as they effect the spontaneous and intuitional phases of our whole spiritual nature.

In passing on to the subject of Christian *theology*, we make an entire transition from the intuitional into the logical sphere of the question. We have now no longer to wind our way amongst the deep and almost hidden phenomena of *feeling*; but we come out at once into the clear and well-defined region of logical truth, and have to occupy ourselves with the principles on which it is possible to ground a formal and scientific statement of religious *doctrine*.

If, therefore, we have probed accurately the relation which exists *generally* between the intuitional and the logical consciousness in human nature, we shall not experience much

difficulty, and cannot be led into much error, by applying our results to the subject of the present chapter, i. e., to the relation which subsists between *religion* and *theology*.

I. We shall begin this investigation, therefore, by inquiring into the precise *nature* of theology, as distinguished from religion.

The whole amount of interest which man is capable of feeling, in reference either to religion or theology, arises, of course, from his enjoying some immediate perception of the objects to which they both equally relate. Were our minds so constituted that the sphere of our experience did not at all extend into the province of spiritual things, there would be no more need and no more *possibility* of our having either a religion or a theology, than there actually is in the case of the mere animal minds around us. As, to a mind which has no perception of beauty in its concrete forms, there could be no æsthetical emotions, and no *science* of the beautiful; as, to a mind totally destitute of moral sensibility, there could be no moral life apparent in the world, and no idea of a moral philosophy;—just so, in the case before us, the primary condition on which the whole question of religion and theology arises and takes its place amongst the subjects of human feeling and human interest is, the possession of a *religious sensibility* which presents the fundamental objects involved in all religious emotion or contemplation to our immediate intuition. In few words, all religion and all theology have their origin and possibility in a direct and inward *revelation*.

Were this power of religious sensibility absolutely perfect; were the intuitions or revelations we thus enjoy of spiritual things *complete;* were our whole interior being so precisely harmonized with truth itself, that we needed only to stand, as it were, in the pathway of its rays and receive the impression in all its distinctness and brightness within us;—

then, indeed, there would be no necessity for any other mental process whatever to assure ourselves of the truth. But this perfect state of the intuitional consciousness, we know, has been disturbed; at any rate, it does not naturally *exist;* the reflection of spiritual truth within us is distorted by a thousand causes;—by moral evil, by education, by prejudice, by false reasoning, and by many other influences we need not at present enumerate.

Christianity, it is true, seeks to restore this power of spiritual intuition to its original state; and just in proportion as it purifies the soul, elevates the mind, and brings the whole inward *man* into sympathy with the truth as it exists in the mind of God, does it really accomplish its great purpose. But to how limited an extent is this process carried in the present world; what darkness and doubt still hover even over the really Christianized mind; how many prejudices insensibly mingle up with our best and clearest spiritual intuitions; and in how few cases can we say, that there is even an approximate harmony realized between man's own interior being, and the truth of God in its objective reality! Hence, accordingly, the origin, and hence the necessity, of another, and that a *logical* process, to give greater clearness and distinctiveness to our intuitions; hence the impulse we feel to convert the spontaneous religious life into the reflective; hence, in fine, the rise of a *formal theology.*

The effort of theology, it will be seen upon reflection, is always to give a definite form and scientific basis to our religious life, and to the spiritual truth involved in it. The religious *life,* entirely consisting as it does in emotion and intuition, presents this truth to the mind of man in the concrete, and *as a whole.* Were the view we thus obtain perfectly clear and uniform, we should need nothing more. But Divine things, alas! are reflected upon the surface of our spiritual nature after it has been ruffled by distracting pas-

sions, prejudices, or cares; just as, when the bosom of a lake is fretted by the wind and the storm;—and thus the Divine symmetry of the objects presented is broken and lost to our view. It is *then* that the logical or analytic faculty comes to our aid, and seeks to restore to us the harmonious proportions of truth; not, indeed, by affording an immediate glance at the concrete whole, but by separating it into its parts, comparing one portion with another, and thus discovering, if possible, the consistency which runs through them all. By intuition, we should have seen the objects presented to us at once in their natural and concrete *unity;* by logic, we now seek to *construct* a unity by a mixed analytic and synthetic process,—to verify, singly, the abstract consistency of each part, and to bring our entire conceptions of the truth into a *logical* whole.

Without lengthening, then, our description of the nature of Christian theology, as distinguished from religion, we may say in general, that, as the one is connected with the operation of the intuitional faculty, and the other with that of the logical, so they will each manifest the characteristics peculiar to these respective spheres of our consciousness. First of all, the one gives us *presentative* knowledge, the other *representative;* for the fresh and concrete perceptions we obtain of spiritual things in the vital awakenment of our religious nature are, in fact, direct presentations of truth to the inward eye; while the propositions of formal theology are but the best representation we can make of that truth, in definite and abstract terms, to the understanding.

Religion, again, is *spontaneous* in its whole character; theology is *reflective*. The one arises unconsciously when the heart is touched by the fire from heaven, and pictures out before us, even to our own awe and astonishment, the wonderful revelations of God to man; the other proceeds reflectively from stage to stage, and gives a scientific value

to every thing it appropriates as it moves onward in its course.

Thirdly. Religion has a *material* value—theology only a *formal*. But for the intuitional process involved in the former, we should not be brought into contact with the objective elements of Divine truth at all; for intuition always marks the boundaries of our actual experience: but for the logical process implied in the latter, we should never be able to mould these elements into the form of a science or a system.

Fourthly. Religion gives us truth in its unity, and tends to inspire unity into all hearts similarly affected by it; theology separates religious truth into its various parts by the process of abstraction, points out logical distinctions, and is too apt to produce disagreement where the religious life is not powerful enough to overbalance its critical tendency.

Finally. Religion bears upon it a generic character, growing up in the moral development of communities and nations; while theology, formally considered, has a purely individual character, and must always be placed *entirely* at the mercy of the individual judgment. Our religious *life* we receive, for the most part, traditionally, from the development of Christian consciousness in the different communities which now compose the visible Church: and the very fact of its continued historical existence, as of its moral power in the world, gives it an authority which no one can gainsay, any more than we can deny man's distinctive intuitions of the beautiful or the good: but every mind can criticise a *theological system*, and convict it of illogical processes, wherever it lies open to scientific objections.

Such, then, are the distinctive characteristics of religion and theology. The one appeals to the deep moral and spiritual instincts of the human heart; the other aims at gaining, and even forcing, the ascent of the human intellect. The one takes us at once beyond the reach of the human faculties,

and offers to us perceptions of truth such as we never could gain by any formal effort of our own, and never infer from prior data; the other seeks to define these very perceptions, to make them reflective, and to reduce them all to the form of the logical understanding. Religion, accordingly, is always *beyond*,—theology, as such, always *within* the limits of the natural reason.

II. We have to show the *conditions* necessary to the construction of Christian theology.

These conditions are two, of which the first and main condition is, *the direct inward presentation of the spiritual objects involved in Christianity to the mind*. These objects were presented as a Divine revelation to the apostles;—they were presented to them in the life, history, and teaching of Christ; they were presented to them in the inspiration by which their power of spiritual intuition was perfected; they were presented to them in the organization and moral life of the first Christian communities.

Having received this manifestation of Divine realities *themselves*, they frequently communicated it to their numerous converts—not, indeed, by logical explanation (for this would have been impossible), but by bringing them into contact with the very same spiritual influences which had awakened and renovated their own religious nature. This communication of spiritual truth, indeed, was involved in the very production of that new spiritual life which so remarkably commenced on the day of Pentecost. But for such an awakenment, there would have been no *interest* in the subject; the world would have gone on insensible to these Divine realities; on the contrary, in the very excitement of this deep religious feeling, the great elements of the Christian revelation were first brought home to the popular mind.

Let us follow for a little in our imagination the continued history of this same process. Wherever the apostles

went they awakened, as we learn, the same deep emotions; they drew forth the cry, "Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved;" they presented the great fact, that Christ, crucified and arisen, was the way, the truth, and the life. Such emotions as these scenes indicate naturally induced fellowship: "They were all together in one place;" "they broke bread from house to house;" they were cemented in religious sympathy. But as yet there was no *theology*, properly so called; the age of religious excitement was come, not yet the age of reflective religious contemplation.

This leads us, accordingly, to the *second* condition necessary to the existence of theology; and that is, the application of consecutive logical *thinking* to the intuitions spontaneously involved in the Christian *life*. This takes place according to that fixed law of our nature by which man ever seeks to define and complete his knowledge. Conscious that our intuitions, however vivid and exciting, are not perfect; conscious that there is an indistinctness about them which needs to be cleared up, we no sooner experience a period of calmness after the subsidence of the first overwhelming emotions of religious awakenment, than we begin to *reflect* upon the whole phenomena of the case, and to verify the accuracy of our notions, first by defining them, and then working them up into a regular logical construction. As, in all other branches, knowledge begins in wonder (which is merely saying that it begins in the fresh, living, and spontaneous impressions of truth upon an awakened consciousness), so, eminently, does it thus commence in the region of Christian theology. The very enthusiasm which attends its birth, gives the stimulus to future investigation; and the mighty impulse of our religious intuitions becomes in time the mainspring that carries on the working of the law, by which the spontaneous life of Christianity merges into the reflective,—

by which religion passes over into theology. We conclude, then, that the essential prerequisites of Christian theology are these two,—a religious nature, awakened by the development of the Christian life; and the application of logical reflection to the elements of Divine truth, which that life spontaneously presents.

It may, perhaps, be remarked by some with surprise, that in enumerating the *essential* conditions of Christian theology, I have said nothing about the Bible: if I have succeeded, however, in the preceding chapter in making our view of the inspiration of the Scriptures clear and valid, their relation to Christian theology will at once become apparent. It will be seen, first of all, that the existence of the Scriptures, *as such*, was not *essential* to the rise and maintenance of Christian theology at all. Take the case of any of the very early Churches, who had perhaps heard, or perhaps had not heard the preaching of the apostles, but who certainly never enjoyed a sight of their writings. These Churches, assuredly, could enjoy the power of true Christianity, and could have possessed a valid Christian theology, as well as *we*. And yet there were no Christian Scriptures in the case: there could be, therefore, no poring over the letter, —no induction of passages,—no verbal criticism whatever. There could be simply the awakening of a new religious life by the proclamation of human sin and of human recovery by Christ, the chosen of God on the one side, and their own attempts to bring such religious feelings and intuitions into a clear reflective statement on the other.

Now the Bible stands to *us* in the same light in which the agencies that brought the Christian life into the hearts of these early disciples stood to *them*. *We* want to know of Christ—we want to gaze upon his moral image—we want to *live through* the scenes of his history, sufferings, death, and resurrection, as did *they*: and whatever means could bring

these things vividly and authentically before our minds, and awaken our religious emotions by the spiritual influences operating through them, would give to *us* the basis of a Christian life and a Christian theology, just as it did to the multitudes, who never saw the letter of the Word.

The Scriptures in fact become to us now of such supreme importance, in consequence of *the distance* at which we live from the actual scenes, and the spiritual life which they depict. Of these things they are our only authentic narratives; they were selected by the early Church as being at once the most unquestionable descriptions of Christ's whole life, by those who were eye and ear witnesses; and the most distinctive manifestation of the spirit of the apostolic preaching: they serve, therefore, as a touchstone whereby to compare the whole complexion of our own religious life with that of the apostles, and the spiritual features of our own character with the image, mirrored to us in the Word, of the Saviour himself. No doubt all the early Churches would have prized the full Canon of the Scripture, had they possessed it, as *aids* to their own spiritual enlightenment; but *to us* their value is just so much the greater in proportion to our want of any other authentic source through which we may be brought into contact with the image of Christ, and the spirit of the apostolic mission.

What is *necessary* to Christian theology is an historical knowledge of *Christ* and a perception of the spirit and matter generally of the apostolic teaching; for without these we can have no religious life *in the distinctively Christian sense.* To whatever extent, then, the Bible is necessary to communicate such a knowledge and such a perception, it is necessary *at present* to the existence of Christian theology; (and when we consider how wonderfully adapted it is to unfold the spiritual nature of man, it is hard to assign it too high a place;) but it will be seen at once that the position it takes

in relation to theology is totally different from that which is assigned it by those who ground their theology, professedly at least, upon an induction of individual passages, as though each passage, *independently of the spirit of the whole*, were of Divine authority.

Against such a formal use of the letter of Scripture in theology, our whole view of inspiration is a protest and an argument. The inspiration of the apostles was vested in their intuitional nature, not in the ordinary and logical use of their faculties; and the only way in which *we* can see the truth as they did, is by entering into the spirit of their life and writings, not by adhering simply to words or expressions. Nay, even supposing the letter had been *verbally* imparted from heaven, yet the comprehension of it must still depend upon the extent to which our whole spiritual nature is unfolded, so as to enter *essentially* into its meaning and force. A mere induction of passages, therefore, grounded on the mere *logical* force of the words, could give us no fixed result, simply because it would present no fixed data; for as the subjective part of the process—that, I mean, which is contributed by the intelligence and spiritual comprehension of the inquirer—varied, so would also the meaning and intensity of the sacred words themselves vary, as data standing in connection with his own peculiar system of theological truth. Nay, we may put the question in yet a stronger light; for as the actual material of our knowledge all comes through direct and intuitional processes, it is evident that a man bringing simply the formal or critical faculty to the work of constructing a theology, might create out of the Scriptures a system purely logical, without ever perceiving in it a single element of positive truth. Words, propositions, definitions, &c., may be the representatives of living ideas to those minds which have personally experienced them, but to others they are only logical forms, with no reality in them. The words of Scrip-

ture, to give us a valid theology, must have *ideas* attached to them, which ideas can never be made matter of direct experience by any kind of definition whatever. Theology must have a *matter* as well as a form; and the matter of it can only be derived from the revelation of truth to the inward consciousness as a living experience. All these considerations, therefore,—and many more might be added,—bring us alike to the conclusion, that the *essential prerequisites* of Christian theology are the spiritual enlightenment of the mind, and logical reflection upon the intuitions, which it involves.

There is only one other point which here requires confirmation, and that is, the validity of the assertion we have made, that religion is always the basis of theology, whereas it is very widely imagined that theology comes *first*, and that religious awakenment is consequent upon it. The difficulty here experienced arises from confounding the logical and the chronological order of phenomena in the human mind. Logically, there can be no doubt but that the spontaneous life always *precedes* the reflective. Wherever theology exists, it necessarily supposes a prior perception of the spiritual ideas which are formally stated in it. Without the impulse derived from religious intuitions, there would have been no more disposition to create theological science, than there would be to create a moral science without any perception of moral relations.

Chronologically, however, the case may be reversed. Theology, having once been created, can be presented didactically to the understanding before there is any awakening of the religious nature, and can even lead the mind to whom it is presented to such an interest in the subject as may issue in his spiritual enlightenment. It should be remembered, then, that in discussing philosophically the relation of theology to religion, we of course confine ourselves to the *logical* view

of the question; and in this sense the order of phenomena, as we have described it, is *uniformly* preserved. Not only is this conclusion borne out by the analysis of the faculties, but it is equally verified by history itself. In the primitive Church we clearly trace the development of a distinctive Christian theology, *out of* the religious life of those wondrous times; and in every subsequent instance in which a new form of theology has appeared, as in the time of the Reformation, it has always sprung out of the deep religious excitement of that particular age. Mere criticism upon a given system may take place at any time; but it is only when the whole spiritual element has been fused by the intensity of religious fervor, that it becomes plastic under the constructive power of the logical understanding, and can be moulded anew into a distinct and living form of Christian theology.

III. We come next to consider *the method* of theology.

There are few subjects on which there exists popularly so much confusion of thought as upon this. Growing up as we do within certain communities, and absorbing quite unconsciously the ideas professed and inculcated by them, there is nothing more difficult than to separate these ideas from the essential elements of Christianity; to view them as dogmas humanly constructed; and to trace out the process by which they have been formed. Most men have no idea whatever of the *method* by which *their own theology* has originated, or the elements which it really contains. Inherited traditionally from the religious thinking of the past, the most fundamental portion of it is viewed rather as having a kind of fixed and axiomatic certainty about it, as though it were impossible for any soundly constituted mind to view the question in any other light, or for the Scriptures to bear any other meaning.

The consequence is, that even professed theologians, whose minds have not been trained to accurate habits of ana-

lysis, are deceived both as to the method which has been previously followed, and as to the method which they are themselves virtually following in the construction of their theology. Leaving the main body of the edifice untouched, they propose a few modifications, and carry on a few researches, simply in relation to some of the *details*, and then fancy that the method they employ *here* is that of formal theology as a whole, tacitly supposing the entire superstructure to have been erected on the same principles.

It has been a very extended notion, since the prevalence of the Baconian method in scientific research, that just as the facts of natural science lie before us in the universe, and have to be generalized and systematized by the process of induction, so also the facts of theology lying before us in the Bible have simply to be moulded into a logical series, in order to create a Christian theology. We shall not stop to remark, at present, upon the wrong use of the word "fact," as employed in reference to the contents of the Bible, since that will come before us more fully in the next chapter; but letting this particular point stand by, we would simply ask, Who is there that has ever constructed a theology upon these principles? Take any case whatever, and consider whether the theologian you suppose has not received a given amount of mental influence from those who have preceded him. So closely are certain habits of thinking, certain philosophical ideas, certain traditionary views of human life, of the Deity, of duty, and destiny,—yea, certain *forms of thought* which are applicable to all subjects whatever, interwoven with our intellectual being, that the idea of stripping away these integuments, and looking at the Scriptures with a mind perfectly cleared of all influence except that which flows from their own hallowed pages, is a state of man's intellectual being purely imaginary.

Let it be remembered, moreover, that what we have to

do in constructing a theology is, not simply to be directly recipient of Divine ideas, whether they flow from the Scriptures or elsewhere; but to mould these ideas into a scientific form. However simply, therefore, we might receive the engrafted Word as a Divine revelation, yet the moment we begin to act the part of *theologians*, and systematize the truth, that moment we must proceed according to some logical plan or scientific *organum;* and this organum, we know, must be the result of some human system of philosophy, or to say the least, of some philosophical *method*. Here, accordingly, is another element in our theological construction which comes from the scientific thinking of our own, or of some previous age.

Put the case, in fine, in any point of view in which it is possible to be thrown; reduce the amount of extraneous influence in the theologian to a minimum, yet when he comes to the Scriptures, to make his induction, he *must* proceed according to certain conceptions even in his very classification; he must view the passages, separately, according to the light of his own religious development; he must place them side by side, according to the *idea* he has respecting the truth they are supposed to convey. The history of Doctrines, in fact, confirms and establishes what we have shown to be *inevitable*, from the very nature of the case,—that whether men may be conscious of it or not, they *must* and they *do* use the logical instruments of their times, and that still further they can never avoid viewing the questions upon which these instruments are to be employed, according to the current conceptions and the whole religious development of the age.

Having placed, then, this inductive scheme in a somewhat clearer light, and shown that no one, whatever he professes, *really* acts upon it, we must consider the claims of another and very opposite method of theology—the method, I mean, which begins with the definition of purely intellectual

ideas, and builds up a whole system consecutively upon them. This method was virtually that of the latter scholastic writers, as it is that of the present divines of the Rationalistic school. These theologians commence ordinarily with the most abstract conceptions. Out of these abstractions they construct the notion of a Deity; from that they proceed to create a moral government, next they infer the relation of mankind to this government which they have constructed, and finally draw out in logical succession the whole system of Divine arrangements and of human duty consequent upon their primary definitions. The whole is unitedly an affair of the logical understanding; the necessity of possessing spiritual life, and any immediate intuitions of Divine things as one condition of a true theology, is not surmised; and thus the whole essence of Christianity tends to become, to their minds, an intellectual chain of propositions, the belief of which forms the basis of their Christian profession.

Still, even *here*, men are usually more reasonable than their theories. Just as we found it impossible for any one to ground a theology on a mere induction of passages of Scripture, so it is virtually impossible to proceed upon the purely abstract measure we have just described. However strenuously men may appeal to the logical understanding as the basis of their theology, and however strongly they may appeal to the definitions they employ, yet there is always some under-current of *spiritual life*, or *experience*, out of which these very definitions are evolved; and this experience, too, is connected in no slight degree with the moral influence of the Scriptures, and the religious consciousness of the age. Thus we are reduced to the conclusion that theology is, of necessity, the systematic product of two factors, a moral or intuitional on the one hand, a critical or logical on the other. The one is a revelation brought home to us by the awakenment of a new and Divine spiritual life, whether that awaken-

ment arise from the direct influence of inspired apostles, or the preaching of the Gospel by men, themselves imbued with its spirit and power, or by the study of the Word of God; for these, be it observed, are alike spiritual agencies adapted to quicken and develope our religious nature, and bring us into contact with the Divine ideas, which form the experimental basis of Christian theology. The other, or critical factor, consists of the best logical aids and appliances which the philosophy of the age can present. The combination of these two elements will always originate *a theology;* the one giving the matter, the other supplying the form.

In brief, the true Christian theologian must be *regenerate*, —the vital spirit of truth must have penetrated to that inmost shrine of the soul, that centre and focus of his spiritual being, that pure and essential element of man's higher nature, which is immediately connected with God, which alone holds direct intercourse with the Divine mind, to which all the other faculties stand merely in the relation of servants and emissaries. This element of the divinity within us may be repressed and obscured; its light may be extinguished, its voice silenced; but never can it be corrupted, never essentially perverted. It is this part of our nature, then, which is the seat of the life of God in the soul of man; it is its voice which reminds us of our absolute dependence on him, and its influence which links us indissolubly to the Divinity. Hence it is alone the proper organ of religion perceiving its real nature, and supporting its Divine claims upon our reverence and love.

From this point of view we see the importance, nay, the necessity of spiritual purification, in order to prepare both the emotional and the intellectual powers for the service of theology. Reason can only criticise effectively in proportion as it acts harmoniously with our higher and spiritual nature; without this harmony it acts blindly, running into bare

negations, wandering amidst barren abstractions, or drawing perverse inferences from false and insufficient data. If logical reasoning were alone sufficient to make a sound theologian, then Satan would be amongst the best theologians in existence; but he will signally fail in this operation, if it is necessary that an inward and progressive experience of spiritual things should capacitate the reason for the work of constructing a true theology—that is, for describing in scientific terms the real elements of our higher life. To do this, it is evident, there must be not only the keen and critical understanding, but there must be also the purity of heart, by which alone we can *see* God—the active spirit of duty by which alone we can know of his doctrine—the love of which it is said, he that possesses it dwelleth in God, and God in him.

The great practical points, therefore, to be ever kept in view, as necessary to the theologian, are these three; first, that the religious life be pure and scriptural; secondly, that the logical aids employed in criticism be sound and philosophical; and, thirdly, that there be a due equipoise of the two elements, in bringing out finally the whole result.

With regard to the first of these requisites, the training required is principally of a moral and religious character. To insure the purity and adequacy of our religious intuitions, we must enter primarily into the spirit of the Scriptures; we must study the life and character of Christ; we must attempt to realize the great ideas involved in the apostolic mission. Next to that we must investigate the history of the Church, trace its development, and see the great religious impulses under which the best and holiest men have lived and acted. Lastly, we must ourselves enter into the practical duties of the Christian life, try to realize in ourselves its spirit and its elevation, and foster the whole by Christian activity, by fellowship, by self-renunciation, and by com-

munion with God. We look upon a theological method wanting these moral influences, as defective in the most important and fundamental conditions of fulness and efficiency.

With regard to the second requisite, the logical aids to be employed are chiefly definition, induction, deduction, and verification. In a scientific construction, it is absolutely necessary to begin by definitions; and, in the case before us, we must grasp the great spiritual or moral ideas involved in our religious life, and represent them, as nearly as possible, in logical propositions. This will mark out the limits of our experience. Having gone thus far we can appeal to facts—facts of history, facts relating to Christ and the apostles, facts relating to the formation and growth of the Christian Church, facts in the religious life of our own and every age, —criticising those facts by the laws of evidence, and the principles of logical analysis, and merging them into more general facts of a more recondite kind. Having proceeded so far, we may use the aid of *deduction*, and reason downwards from the principles already established, to the less general notions implicitly involved in them. And, finally, during the whole course of our logical construction, we must *verify* every result, by an appeal to human experience, knowing how easily we may be led on in the ardor of reasoning, to results which are entirely incompatible with the laws of human nature, and the daily phenomena of the religious life. In this way we shall originate a series of propositions, which will be as it were *authoritative expressions* of the Christian consciousness, uttering itself articulately in the ears of humanity.

Finally, we must ever seek to give its due place to each of the factors by which the whole result is brought forward. A too exclusive reliance upon the moral element will give a theology loose and disjointed, possessing perhaps much positive and intuitional vitality, but a very small critical and

scientific value. This may indeed be quite sufficient for moral purposes—it may subdue the hearts, as did the preaching of the apostles, of multitudes of mankind; but it cannot subserve precisely those intellectual objects for which formal theology is chiefly designed, while it *may* degenerate, ere we are aware, into a vague mysticism, and sometimes a mischievous fanaticism.

On the contrary, the predominance of the critical element will give a negative character to the whole result. Criticism can only observe distinctions, draw forth inconsistencies, lop off excrescences, and seek to arrange the parts of a system in due logical order; never can it take in the *organic unity* of the whole. It defines and clears our ideas indeed; but when too exclusively relied upon, it does so only at the expense of narrowing our range of vision; it makes our knowledge more precise, but adds no material to our actual experience. Hence a theology purely critical will become hollow and formal; it will delight in abstractions; it will please the understanding by its subtlety and its symmetry; but instead of giving nourishment to the spiritual nature of man, it will feed him with dry logical formulas, which utterly fail to support the vigor of his moral life.

In fine, this method of Christian theology, as a science, harmonizes with the highest ideas which have been formed of the real process of all scientific researches. Those who are most fluent in elevating the merits of what they term *Baconian* and *inductive* principles, as applied to theological inquiry, have commonly very little idea of what induction really involves. A thorough investigation of this very method, with the works of Professor Whewell as their guide, would show them that the classification of facts, without the proper grasp and explication of the *conceptions* in which they are to be grounded, would lead to a very unsatisfactory result,

even in any case of ordinary science. Much more unsatisfactory would it be in the case of a science where the intuitional element is greater than in any other, and where the moral state of the inquirer is above all things of supreme importance. For our own part, we look upon the *reflective method* of theology above described, as the only one which at all harmonizes with the philosophical principles on which scientific investigation is universally grounded; and as to its results, while the moral extreme drives us into the shades of mysticism, and the critical extreme (although it may profess to ground itself upon the letter of the Word), yet employs at best a mere rationalistic process of inquiry,—here we have a theology which, based primarily upon the living consciousness of the Church, brings its whole conclusions at length into the clearest form of logical and scientific truth.

IV. We come to notice next the *development* of theology.

An inquiry has often been raised with regard to the progressiveness of theology as a science, and different conclusions have been formed, according to the view which is taken of the whole nature and method of theological research. If the conclusions to which we have already arrived be correct, we shall find little difficulty in determining this question, for the data on which the solution depends lie already before us.

Theology, we have seen, is the product of two factors—a moral, and a critical, and if there be a progressive development of either of these factors in the human mind, there must also be a development in the whole result.

Now in looking first to the moral side of the question, we have only to consider whether there be such a thing as progress in our spiritual intuitions, in respect either to their nature or intensity. The whole character of the intuitional

consciousness, as well as the voice of universal experience, answers this inquiry in the affirmative. We have seen in a previous chapter, that every thing of an intuitional character not only unfolds itself more and more in the individual, but has likewise an organic vital development in humanity at large; and the history of every pious mind, as well as the internal history of the whole Church, shows us that this is realized in the actual growth of the religious life.

This fact indeed arises from the very nature of intuition, as a *direct* manifestation of truth. In the case of the apostles, the spiritual vision was as nearly as possible *perfect;* so purely was their inward nature harmonized to the truth of God, that no intervening clouds of human prejudice, folly, or actual sin, disturbed the gaze with which they could look upon it in its concrete unity. But it was not possible for the apostles to communicate the same strength of vision, and the same interior harmony of the moral nature to others; for that would have been the same thing as communicating their *very inspiration.* All they could do was to arouse the religious feelings; to direct them aright to their proper objects; to set the Christian life in operation; and then to leave it, under the promise of Divine aid, to its future development. Hence the constant struggle of our spiritual nature is *towards* this very state of spiritual perfection; and just in proportion as the power of the world and the flesh becomes less—in proportion as the storms of human passions cease to ruffle the surface of the soul—in proportion as the whole nature is brought more into harmony with truth and with God—will there be a clearer reflection within us of Divine things.

And what is true of the individual is equally true of the whole Church. The Church is *a living unity;* it has a spiritual vitality of its own, which developes organically in the world. Every age brings with it fresh conceptions of Divine

realities, as the mists of prejudice which intercepted their view are cleared away; and, consequently, as the *data* of religious thinking given in the increased intensity of the religious life expand, in that proportion will there be room for the perpetual development of theology itself.

The progressiveness of theology, however, depends not only upon the purifying of the spiritual vision by the closer harmonizing of our moral nature with God, but it depends also upon the nature of the criticism we employ in constructing a formal science. The logical organum we make use of in our inquiry, depends almost wholly upon the state of philosophy of the age in which we live. The early theologians made use of the philosophy of Greece, Egypt, and even Asia;—from the time of Augustine downwards, the writings of Aristotle furnished the main instrument of all theological criticism; and from the period of Bacon down to the present day the inductive method has come into use for the same purpose. In brief, whatever be the logical methods most in vogue, these will immediately exert their influence upon the construction of a systematic theology; and those who vainly imagine that in the Baconian idea of induction they have a final organum, have only to turn their eyes to Germany, to assure themselves that, with a profounder philosophy in our hands, we shall not long be without a more subtle instrument of analysis to carry on the work of the theologian himself.

Putting together, therefore, the generic character of our intuitions on the one side, and the rise of more subtle philosophical methods on the other, we see that there are sources of progressive development in both the elements out of which theology is constructed. The only idea we would impress upon the mind of every reader is, that *development* does not imply any organic *change* in the real and essential elements of Christian truth. Different as the seed in its first germination may be in all appearance from the perfect plant,

yet the latter is simply the unfolding of what that seed at first implicitly contained. And so is it with the development of Christian theology in the world. In whatever degree the Christian life has been really awakened, there must have been some real perception of Divine truth; and to whatever extent logical appliances may be used, yet they cannot *alter*, but only *mould* the material which is there given. The increase of spiritual discernment, and the more subtle analysis of philosophical methods, do but tend to bring the truth into a fuller realization and a more scientific form. Under these influences it must march onward in its course until it ushers in the glorious period of the purified Church, and the promised rest of a regenerated world.

We conclude these remarks upon the progressive principle in theology, by the following words of an eloquent German writer:—

"Formal Christian dogmas," he remarks, "may be compared to minerals and metals. They are the production of that original fire, which had so great a part in the formation of our present globe. That fire has smouldered away; metals and stones are dead and cold; of the process which produced them common and superficial minds have no conception. Nothing but a like intense heat can again render the hardened substances fluid, and separate from the nobler metal the foreign dross which has become mingled with it; yet without this they are dull heavy masses, resisting all manufacture by their brittleness or obstinate tenacity. In like manner have our dogmas arisen from similar powerful processes of that intense fire which was kindled by Christ in the human breast. Like fluid substances, they pervaded the productive ages both of early Christianity and of the Reformation. Flowing outwards from its centre, the fluid mass formed itself more and more into fixed bodies, yet long maintained in its glowing state its warmth, and its consequent flexibility. Only when

its was entirely withdrawn from the enlivening operation of the primitive fire, did the dogmas become cold and dead. What, then, may we conclude from this respecting our dogmas? *The material of the dogma is good;* but this genuine material, during the period of its fluid state, became intermixed with the earthy matter of the age, and received from the masters who tried upon it their plastic art, a form which relates to the past, and no longer answers to our present wants. It is the office of theological science ever to labor upon this material, purifying and forming it; but this office can only succeed when the dead masses are again brought to a state of warmth, and even of glowing fluidity, by a like intense fire within the human breast; such a fire can only separate the impure earths, and cast them out as worthless lava: only the fluid or plastic state can afford to the masters of later days the possibility to shape the masses into new forms without the rough strokes of the smiting hammer. Such a fire is for our theologians the very first condition of a genuine criticism—a fire kindled from the altar of the holy and righteous God, which gleams into our drowsy consciences, burning even to a deep-felt conviction of sin; which is nourished by the continual act of penitence and godly sorrow, but also tempered and stilled by the dew of heavenly love." *

V. We have only to refer, lastly, to the proper *uses* of Christian theology.

These, as referring rather to the practical than to the philosophical and speculative side of the question, we shall barely mention, and leave them to be further developed by the reader. The uses of Christian theology are—

* "Der deutsche Protestantismus," p. 166. One of the most deeply interesting and suggestive books of the age by an anonymous German writer, whom I have found to be Prof. Hundeshagen, of Heidelberg.

1. To show the internal consistency of religious truth. Little as we need to see this consistency whilst our inmost souls are burning with a deep and holy enthusiasm, yet in the ordinary state of human life, beset as we are with a thousand repressive influences, it is highly important to strengthen ourselves with every kind of armor against skepticism and indifference. In proportion as our zeal and excitement become cooler, do we need so much the more the concurring testimony of reason to support us in the pursuit of the Christian life. It is upon this we fall back, when the fire of love burns dim, until we can kindle it again from the altar of God. Hence the importance of having Christian truth presented to us in such a form, that we may see its harmony with all the law of our intellectual being, and have *their* witness to seal its truth on our hearts.

2. Another use of Christian theology is to repel philosophical objections. The unbeliever has not the witness within himself; and what is more, he would fain destroy the validity of the truths of Christianity to others, by affirming their inconsistency with reason or with one another. The moral influences of the religious life do not *answer* these objections, although they may disarm them greatly of their force. To answer them, the truth conveyed in the religious life must be made reflective and scientific;—*then*, indeed, and not till then, can itself be maintained, and its consistency defended upon the grounds of the philosophical objector himself.

3. A third use of Christian theology is to preserve mankind from vague enthusiasm. A strong religious excitement is not inconsistent with a weak judgment, a feeble conscience, and active tendencies to folly, and even sin. Under such circumstances, the power of the emotions will sometimes overbalance the better dictates of Christian faith, love, and obedience, so as to impel the subject of them into something bordering upon fanaticism. Against this evil, religion alone

is often unable to struggle; it needs the stronger element of calm reason to curb these wandering impulses, and bring them into due subjection to duty and to truth. Here, then, the influence of *theology* bears upon the whole case; and to its power is it mainly owing that the intense incentives offered by Christianity to the emotive nature of man have been so ordered and directed as to keep him from vague enthusiasm in his belief, and an unsober fanaticism in his actions.

4. The last use we mention to which theology may be applied, is, to embody our religious ideas in a complete and connected system. In this form they appeal to every element in the nature of man. The moral influence they exert upon the whole spirit is coupled with the power of their appeal to the reason, and the intellect of mankind becomes *satisfied* as his heart becomes softened and renewed.

Such, in brief, are some of the principal uses of theology formally considered. With these we close our present observations, reserving what yet remains upon the subject to be embodied in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE ANALYSIS OF POPULAR THEOLOGY.

THE explanations made in the last chapter have now prepared us to analyze the substance of *popular theology*, and to point out distinctly the elements of which it has been composed. The importance of such an analysis we regard as being in the present day *peculiarly pressing;* inasmuch as many minds only partially informed are strongly inclined, whenever they see any portion of the ordinary faith of Christians plausibly contested, to fancy *the whole* equally open to criticism, and thus to involve the eternal with the merely evanescent and temporary, in one common ruin. In an age, therefore, like this, when the keenest criticism is constantly at work to lay hold of every inconsistency in the popular faith, we feel it to be equally necessary, whether we would confront the skeptic or console the believer, to show *what* we are prepared to hold with a loose hand, and what to defend as the essential elements of our common Christianity.

First of all, then, let us look to the popular theology of our own age and country *as a whole*. We find existing amongst different communities a system of theoretical doctrine, which defines with considerable precision the truth they regard as valid and Divine respecting the relations which the Almighty sustains to man in his creation, preservation, redemption, and final salvation. This doctrine having

been gradually brought into the form of clear and logical statement, now presents the above relations to us, not as though they were spiritual *conceptions*, which are involved in the awakenment and illumination of our religious nature, but rather as *facts* which can be presented in their full proportions to the *understanding*. Hence to those who, from want of education, or of mental culture generally, are totally deficient in the critical faculty, the most natural course is, to receive the traditionary system of their own community as a complete and distinctive statement of the truth itself *in its exact objective import*. Where the cultivation of the religious *life*, indeed, wisely forms the most prominent feature of attention, such an artificial view of theoretical doctrine is not so strikingly manifest; but in all cases where the inculcation of a definite formal theology is regarded as being the *main point* that has to be secured in the evangelization of mankind, there the whole system is naturally accepted by the pliant mass, as *literal fact*, to which no kind of criticism is at all accessible. Propositions, indeed, as a matter of course, assume *the form* of a distinct statement of fact; and it requires some little consideration before the propositions of theology are seen to be the expression, not *immediately* of an objective reality, but of an inward conception as to what that reality may actually be.

Whilst, however, the mass of uninstructed minds absorb the theological system, in which they are educated *as a whole*, those who are more reflective soon detect in that system an element of mere human reasoning. This consciousness is, for the most part, awakened by the differences of opinion which exist around them. It might be imagined, perhaps, that the comparison of their formal theology with Holy Scripture, as its acknowledged source, would in *some* cases naturally lead to such a result; but seldom, comparatively, is this the case. Where a given system of theology has com-

pletely preoccupied the mind, the Scriptures always *appear* to speak in exact accordance with it; so much so, indeed, that the system is regarded, more commonly than not, as being the pure reflection into human phraseology, of the distinctive statements of inspired truth. When, however, a mind once gets out of the circle of its own traditionary ideas; when it finds other minds, having a different religious consciousness awakened in them, equally earnest with their own, and equally appealing to Scripture proofs, the thought soon begins to suggest itself, that there *must* be some human element which gives their varied directions and tendencies to these different systems, and which mingles up insensibly with the whole mass of our theological faith. So general has this conviction now become amongst the thoughtful of all parties, that there is a disposition every where apparent to tolerate various theological differences; to acknowledge *all* within a certain boundary, as equally entitled to the Christian name; and to single out only a few great points, which are to be regarded as *essential* to the validity of a theological creed. Such an admission, and such a tolerance, can only arise from a consciousness, either tacitly or openly acknowledged, that there is one element in our dogmatic theology which is variable, unessential, merely human, and another element which is Divine, indispensable, eternal.

The conviction, accordingly, of these two elements being blended in our whole system once clearly gained, it belongs to a still higher order of minds—to men more thoroughly versed in logicalanalys is and historical research—to *separate* the Divine from the human, and to point out the precise sources in the history of theology from whence the latter has been derived. For this purpose, some knowledge of the history of philosophy, as well as theology, is absolutely requisite. Every age has had its own forms and habits of thinking, its own prevailing ideas, its own methods of research,

its own peculiar applications of logical analysis; and as these all enter into the very framework of our mental operations, it is *inevitable* that they should influence the whole process by which the theology of every age is constructed. Hence it is necessary to show *how* philosophical ideas, prevailing at different periods, have become, as it were, absorbed into the body of Christian theology; how these ideas have been floated down the stream of time; how they have passed insensibly over from one system or from one community into another; and how they influence the theological literature of the age in which we are ourselves living.

An historical and critical research of this nature will succeed in separating formal theological creeds, such as are now embodied in catechisms, articles of faith, and even more extended and systematic works, into *two* main elements —the pure scriptural statements on the one side, and the logical processes by which these statements are moulded into scientific form on the other. Added to this, it will point out the precise philosophical doctrines or methods of research which have exerted the greatest influence upon our theological systems; it will lay bare the notions which, flowing from the schools of Athens or Alexandria, tinctured the processes of human thought throughout those precise periods in which Christian theology first moulded itself into its more defined forms and phraseology: and finally, it will show how these notions, with a protean versatility, have thrown themselves into different shapes, embodied themselves in various languages, and retained their hold upon the human mind long after they were supposed to be buried in the common sepulchre of past opinions.*

* This is one *inestimable* service which Dr. Hampden has rendered to our religious literature in his "Bampton Lectures." The learning, the piety, and the courage with which he has maintained his unassail-

The view of theology, accordingly, which is derived from such an analysis as I now describe, is the following, —"that every actual system of doctrinal belief may be separated into two elements—the scholastic and the biblical. The form, the phraseology, the whole scientific *tone* come from '*the schools*;' they are the products of the human *understanding*, and must not be maintained as in any sense possessing a Divine authority. On the contrary, the plain, pure, primitive, spiritual *fact* comes directly from the Bible, in which we have presented, not formal doctrines, indeed, but simply *information* respecting the merciful dealings of God in the recovery of man."

So far the analysis proceeds with perfect historical and critical accuracy; but on looking somewhat closely at the element which is expressed under the term "*scriptural fact*," we find that it needs a still further analysis, since the idea there conveyed, so far from being *simple*, manifestly comprehends *other* and still simpler ideas under it. A considerable portion of the Bible, *e. g.*, is occupied in giving us statements of *historical facts*—of events which actually took place, as related by eye and ear witnesses. The term FACT, however, is also frequently applied to the ideas conveyed to us in the Scriptures respecting the dealings of God to man. But here it has clearly an entirely different signification. These are not facts of simple history, like those above mentioned; they involve *moral conceptions*—conceptions, moreover, which cannot reach the exact objective truth, in the same sense as does the description of a real and palpable event, but which are rather accommodated to the practical wants of our own spiritual nature. In brief, the Scriptures,

able positions against the attacks of the really ignorant on the one hand, and the wilfully blind on the other, will one day, and that ere long, be acknowledged with gratitude and devout admiration.

while they embody a history of actual events, are yet mainly intended to *awaken* our religious nature to the direct intuition of spiritual things. On the one hand, then, there is within them an element of *historical fact*, on the other, an element of *moral significancy*: the former consists in a description of events; the latter is a description, direct or indirect, of those Divine intuitions which revealed to the minds of the writers the great living *elements* of Christian truth.

Now it is out of the historical fact and the spiritual intuition *combined*, that logical or dogmatic statements are eliminated, according to the law by which the spontaneous or intuitional life passes over into the reflective. Hence, if we put all these explanations together, we shall find that Christian theology in its last analysis contains within it *three* distinct elements;—*first*, the historical fact; *secondly*, the moral or intuitional perception; and *thirdly*, the logical distribution and construction of the whole into a system of doctrines. Our attention, therefore, must be turned for a little to these several points in succession.

We turn *first* to the *historical* element. This, as I have said, is simply and solely a question of external *fact*; it leads us to consider what outward and palpable events have taken place in connection with the origin of Christianity, and what have not. The great fundamental question here is,—Are the Scriptures, historically viewed, a fabrication or not?—do they relate events which never took place; or can they be relied on with the same confidence as the most authentic of ancient histories? The whole voice of a sound and valid criticism answers unhesitatingly, that there is no fabrication in the case—that the phenomena presented are of such a nature as to preclude the *possibility* of it—that if any thing can be relied on in the world, as being free from conscious deception, the history of Christ is the case of all others which claims this evidence of entire integrity.

This point, then, being established in the minds of all upright and sound-thinking men, the next question is,—Are these accounts, admitting them to be authentic, open to criticism as to their proper interpretation? And the reply we are constrained to make is, that assuredly they *are* open to it, on the same principles as every thing else which rests upon historical evidence. But then criticism must be *reasonable;* it must *admit* facts which are proved valid by all the laws of evidence; and it must not deny phenomena simply because they are inconsistent with some favorite system of philosophy, or so explain them away as to make their appearance in the history more unaccountable than their literal veracity.

The same line of argument must be applied to the scheme which gives a *mythical* origin to the facts of Scripture history. In every case of this nature, it has to be considered, whether the theory presented is not a case far more strange and unaccountable than is that which it proposes to explain. In brief, the historical element of Christianity has to be verified by all the aids which historical criticism can supply, however little we may require this process of proof to convince us of the veracity of those moral conceptions which the historical facts illustrate or embody. We do not, of course, essay now to *prove* the credibility of the facts of Scripture; we merely desire to point out what we *mean* by the historical element in Christian theology; and to aver that every man, be his dogmatical creed what it may, who admits that the facts recorded in the New Testament did take place, as they are described by eye-witnesses, is a believer as much as *any* man *can be*, in the purely historical part of our Christian faith.

But then it becomes all the more apparent from this very view of the case, that there is no *religious* element at all in the outward fact *as such*. The facts of Scripture derive their

religious importance from the *conceptions* united to them,—from the feeling that they had a certain significancy in the plans of Divine Providence. The fact, for example, that Jesus Christ came into the world, merely expresses *historically* the statement, that a human being so named appeared at a given period, and performed such and such actions. The *religious* aspect of this fact depends upon the conception, that he had a certain relationship to the Deity, and a certain mission to mankind, a conception which must necessarily embody many high religious ideas and intuitions.

Take, again, the great and wondrous fact of the *death* of Christ. As a fact of sense, this is no more than the murder of any innocent man that ever lived, to satiate the passions of a lawless multitude. But the moment we view this fact as part of a providential *plan* for the salvation of the world, we attach to it a significancy of which the senses can know nothing—of which the spiritual nature alone can judge. And so bring all the outward and visible facts connected with the life, death, and resurrection of Christ to a focus, yet if we sweep away all power of *moral* perception, these very facts, so great, so glorious, so Divine, when viewed by the light of that elevated Christian consciousness which they themselves contribute to awaken, become comparatively meaningless and ineffective. In every case alike the historical *actuality* is one thing, the moral significancy is quite another.

This leads us therefore, secondly, to expound more fully what we mean by the *moral* element in Christian theology. By the moral element we mean to designate every thing in the Scriptures which appeals at once to the moral or religious nature of man, and tends to awaken within it the Christian life. It expresses, in fact, the whole of those manifestations in connection with the life, person, and teaching of Christ, which revealed to the apostles themselves the

Divine conceptions in which their religious vitality was all cradled, together with the representations they have given us in their own lives and writings of apostolical Christianity, in its spontaneous and most practical form.

In this moral or intuitional element, accordingly, we may include the *miracles* of Christ, viewed, not indeed as mere facts appealing to the senses, but as revealing to the inward perceptions of mankind the real working of a Divine power in nature, and the connection of that power with the great Author of moral truth,—the God of the human affections. The same significancy appears in the *actions* and the *sufferings* of Christ, all of which embodied in a living form the most exalted ideas of moral grandeur and Divine compassion; while the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Saviour awakened new perceptions of life eternal, consequent upon a participation in his kingdom, that may be truly said to have brought immortality itself to light through the Gospel.

The same indications of a new and Divine experience, involving the perception of high spiritual realities, appear in the labors, the voluntary sufferings, and the religious writings of the Apostles. These all present to us moral phenomena and religious conceptions before entirely unknown in the history of mankind; and connected as they were with the deepest stirring of their spiritual being, as by an inspiration from heaven, all indicate a Divine revelation of eternal truth and love, proffered in mercy, through these agencies, to the world.

Now what we wish to make evident to our readers is this,—that the historical and the moral elements, as above described, form the whole of what is *essential* to Christianity. Whether we look to the subjective side or to the objective—whether we consider the state of the religious emotions themselves which Christianity involves, or whether we look to the

consciousness of redemption through a personal Redeemer, Jesus Christ, all is essentially involved in the historical fact, and the spiritual life which we derive from the Scriptures. This conclusion, indeed, results from the very nature of revelation itself. Revelation, as we showed in a former chapter, is necessarily confined to direct and intuitional processes; with logical abstractions, notions, definitions, and reasonings, it has nothing whatever to do. Here, then, in the outward fact and the spiritual illumination we have both the lower and the higher intuitional processes brought into action; and whatever is peculiar or essential to the Christian system is revealed to us through these two distinctive media. The Scriptures themselves consist almost exclusively of facts on the one hand, and concrete representations of spiritual ideas and practical duties on the other. Whatever there may be beyond this of an abstract and logical character, is but the natural operation of the understanding of the writers, distinct from the inspired vision they possessed of Divine realities.

With regard to the relation subsisting between the historical fact and the spiritual idea, they are to be regarded as *poles* or complements to each other. To disconnect them would be to mar and mutilate the whole Divine system. The historical facts *without* their moral meaning would be, religiously speaking, powerless and void; the spiritual intuitions, if not brought out into actual realization, would remain vague and comparatively uninfluential. The historical needs to be penetrated with the moral, the moral to be actualized by the historical; and thus, while they stand apart as poles to each other, there is a mutual *interpenetration* of the two elements, which lends the proper force and value to both.

Thus, evident as it is that Christianity, essentially speaking, is a life within the inner consciousness of man, and evident as it is that the Almighty might have forgiven the sin-

ner, and vindicated his law, and imparted pure affections by the mere fiat of his power and grace;—yet in the historical facts connected with the redemption of the world,—in the person and work of the Messiah, we have the moral agencies by which such a relation to God, and such a state of the religious affections, can be realized by us *as free agents*. In the person and work of Christ, the whole of Christianity is implicitly involved. There is the germ, there the commencement of its whole life, its whole activity, its whole history. Sweep away the perfection we see actualized in him, and there is no point in the world's history on which we could fix our gaze as by any possibility becoming the starting-point of the higher life,—no other realization of Divine perfection in humanity,—no other example of the Word made flesh and dwelling with us. We need to have the highest conceptions of Divine justice and mercy, and the highest type of human resignation and duty, realized in an historical fact, such as we can ever gaze upon with wonder and delight: not till *then* do they become mighty to touch the deepest springs of our moral being. In Christ, accordingly, we have holiness, rectitude, love, mercy, reconciliation, sacrifice, and life from the dead, all embodied in an historical and concrete reality—a reality to which the former dispensations looked forward, and to which the Christian consciousness of redeemed humanity has ever looked backward as to the embodiment of its highest and purest ideal. On this ground it is we lay so much stress upon the historical element of the New Testament, and affirm, that true Christianity *necessarily* involves a belief and full confidence in the personal Messiah. The Christian Church itself, indeed, is but the unfolding of his personality in the world—the building up of the living temple—the growth and completion of the mystical body of Christ. Every individual Christian realizes this for himself when he possesses with

Paul the consciousness, "I live—yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Thus, then, in the historical and the intuitional elements we have all that is essential to a real living Christianity; but we have not yet what is essential to form a Christian *theology*: for this purpose we must add the logical, or dogmatic, element to the other two, so as to reduce them to formal propositions. Now, the propositions of dogmatic theology, while they derive their actual *matter* or *idea* from religious intuition, as given in the Christian life, yet assume the *form* of objective and historical fact. In this way they are related to both the elements above described—related, that is to say, *essentially* to the moral, and *formally* to the historical. It is this close approximation that dogmatical propositions make in their *outward form* to the statements of historical truth, which has given rise to the delusion, that they are themselves the *direct* expression of objective facts—facts cognizable at once either by the senses or the logical understanding. In opposition to this, we shall have to show that religious dogmas are *never* the direct expression of objective facts, *in the same sense* as historical statements are; that the intuitional faculty, on the contrary, *alone* grasps the objective reality of spiritual things; while the dogmatic proposition expresses, as nearly as may be, the *conception* we form by virtue of our intuitions, as to what that reality is. This explains what we mean when we say that the Bible is a book of religion, and not of theology,—namely, that its direct object is to give us clear *conceptions* of Divine things, to awaken our religious consciousness into new life, and present to it the highest objects of spiritual contemplation; not to give us logical statements, which, of a truth, would be in themselves, apart from our intuitions, no revelations at all, and the very import of which *to us* would still depend upon the inward enlightenment of our moral and spiritual nature.

This conclusion respecting the moral or intuitional *substratum* of all formal theological doctrines, we regard as being of the highest importance in enabling us to comprehend the real nature and elements of Christian theology. The admission is now pretty generally made, that a theological system *as a whole* cannot be taken exclusively from the Scriptures—that it cannot be *entirely* an immediate expression of *revealed fact*—that it must have an element of human reason in it, and present us with some partially human conception of the relations subsisting between God and man. But when we come from the entire system to particular dogmas (those of which the very system itself consists), then we often find a resistance of the same inference in respect to them. These individual dogmas, it is said, do not express any inward and peculiar *human* conception respecting man's relation to the Divine; but they are direct statements, taken *at first hand* out of the words of Holy Scripture, and presenting the propositional truth they convey *directly* as objective fact to the logical understanding. Thus an imaginary line is drawn *within the region of dogmatic theology*, on the one side of which is fallibility, on the other side infallibility,—the one portion of which expresses truth according to our inward conceptions, the other portion of which expresses it according to the conception of God, or rather of the Holy Spirit, in his direct revelation to man.

This imaginary line, then, we remove entirely away from the whole province of *formal* theology, admitting and affirming that wherever Divine truth is expressed in a logical proposition, it is the *conception* which is directly expressed, and the objective fact only mediately *through* the conception. This view of the case, indeed, results necessarily from the whole of our reasonings respecting the nature of revelation, and of the inspiration of the Scriptures. If a revelation can only be made in the form of intuition, and if the inspiration

of the apostles consisted in the intensity of their spiritual vision, then it can only be the *intuitional* element of Christian truth to which a real Divinity is attached; and our formal theology, however closely fashioned to the words of Scripture, can embody only as much of this Divine revelation as we have actually realized in the enlightenment of our spiritual nature. Every Christian dogma, accordingly, will be the direct reflex of this inward enlightenment; nay, whatever more it may express to *others*, to us it can have no moral significancy beyond the range of our actual religious experience.

Let us verify this conclusion by adducing particular examples. The Scriptures assure us in many different ways, that *there is a God.* But no one can pretend that this is *a fact*, in the same sense that an historical statement is. In the latter case, the *matter* of the statement is of such a nature, that it can be at once comprehended by the understanding; in the former case, it is only accessible by the moral and spiritual faculty, *i. e.*, by the medium of intuition. When I make the affirmation, therefore, "*there is a God,*" the real meaning of the proposition depends upon the inward conception I attach to the word; neither can the affirmation express to *me*, or to any one, *more* than we have actually realized of the Divine nature. Thus the power of intuition grasps as nearly as it is capable the objective reality; and then the formal proposition expresses articulately the inward *conception* thus originating, whatever may be its complexion or peculiarity.

On this ground it is that we come so much nearer to the truth when we describe spiritual things in concrete images, than when we embody them in merely abstract ideas, *the concrete* being naturally so much more nearly allied to the intuitional faculty than *the abstract.* How slender, for example, is the notion we can form of God from the most elaborate abstract representations of the Divine nature! There

is something, on the other hand, in such conceptions as that of Job pleading his cause before God, purifying himself from the charges of his accusers, arraigning even the Divine actions and purposes before the bar of *Eternal Right*, contending with the Almighty till his ways become clear, and his judgments are seen to be holy ;—there is something, I repeat, in such conceptions as these, that will breathe *moral life* into the human soul, when all the logical precision of our cherished Athanasian phrases will have become a matter of *history*, and perhaps of *astonishment*.

But it might be said in reply to the above example, that the fact of the Divine existence is a doctrine of *natural theology*, which we are to attain prior to the testimony of revelation. Truly so; but the case is precisely the same with regard to every doctrine, whatever may be its source, that contains in it an element of moral and spiritual truth. Take the scriptural doctrine that man is a sinner, condemned by the law of God. In whatever way this doctrine be logically expressed, we cannot call it *a fact*, in the same manner as we might so designate an historical event. The truth which such a doctrine expresses can only be realized by the *moral nature* of man; we may at all times assent to it *formally*, with the mere logical understanding, but unless there is a spiritual perception of *sin*, and of its entire contrariety to the Divine nature, we have no *real* comprehension of the doctrine itself; while precisely according to the nature and intensity of this spiritual perception will be the mode in which we express the doctrine, and the sense we attach to it. Again, therefore, we see that the dogma expresses the inward life,—that life alone, in its intuitional capacity, shows us the moral reality.

Or take, again, any great evangelical statement like this, —"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but

have everlasting life." Will any one contend that this is a simple logical statement, the full meaning of which we may comprehend by the natural understanding? Far from it. This was a direct expression of those great spiritual *ideas* which had aroused the soul of the apostle to intense religious fervor. He had been with Christ, he had witnessed his miracles, life, teaching, death, and resurrection. All these scenes mingled up with his sense of Divine love and mercy to the world, and the purposes of it hereafter. The result was a deep perception that the Creator of the human spirit pitied its sin and misery, purposed its recovery, and had commissioned Jesus Christ to be the medium of human redemption for time and eternity. It was this religious *experience* which at once drew from him the *fact* above stated, and gave it all its significancy; and no one, be his understanding what it may, can grasp that fact *in the same sense* that the apostle did, until his own religious nature is similarly awakened and elevated. The very terms in which the proposition is couched,—God, Son of God, love of God, &c., each and all require a spiritual perception for us to attach any definite meaning to them, to say nothing of the whole complex idea they embrace.

In brief, the facts of the Bible, (if we are to term them so,) such as those connected with sin, recovery, the love of God, the person and work of Christ, are not mere logical statements, the very *form* of which involves a comprehension of the *matter;* they all imply certain high religious conceptions, and certain purely moral ideas, which can only be appreciated by an enlightened state of the religious nature, which, to use the terms of Scripture, are inaccessible to the "natural man," but must be "spiritually discerned." Hence, as the natural understanding cannot discern these things, it cannot select them from the Scripture as facts of which it is directly cognizant, or express them in

positive terms, as it would a fact of history; it is the intuitional faculty which, according to its measure of enlightenment, must grasp the real objective fact, and then the dogma will be the expression of *this*, our inward consciousness, in a propositional form.

Let no one say, therefore, as has been ignorantly or falsely asserted, that this view of Christian theology denies either the historical element of Christianity or the objective validity of its doctrines. It merely affirms that dogmatic theology, whether we view it in the whole, or in its individual parts, is an outward expression of the inward life, awakened by the revelation of the Gospel. That inward life *itself* involves a direct perception of objective truth; although as our religious consciousness is not perfect, but only progressing towards perfection, its perceptions may not be complete, and our expression of dogmatic truth, consequently, may be very inadequate; added to this, even when to some available extent we may have realized the truth of God, yet our logical and critical aids may not prove so perfect as they might be in aiding us to erect our knowledge into a system. But notwithstanding all this, where there is spiritual life there is also a corresponding spiritual reality.

We are not able to say the same thing respecting formal theology. Although it might have indicated primarily a real perception of objective truth, yet it is too often appropriated and professed by many in whom those perceptions have never been awakened. If in any case, therefore, the charge of denying the *objective reality* of Scripture doctrine be well grounded, it is in the case of those who resist the principle of theology we have laid down, and insist upon the dogmas themselves being direct statements *at first hand* of objective facts, *without* the intervention of the spiritual perception. To those who seriously take their stand upon such a principle, we cannot imagine Christian theology to become any thing

greatly better than a mere system-building, in which the form is allowed to stand for the matter, while the mind, absorbed in dialectical subtlety, cheats itself of the living spiritual truth.

The exposition we have given of the nature and elements of Christian theology, offers a complete solution of the phenomena which have so often appeared in the history of Christianity, when the moral consciousness of an age gets beyond its recognized theology, so that the one can no longer satisfy the requirements of the other. The theology of an age naturally embodies itself in books, catechisms, or Church symbols, where of course it remains stereotyped and fixed;—in the meantime, however, the living consciousness of the Church ever unfolds as age after age rolls on, and adds new experiences of the scope and the power of Christian truth. The inevitable result of this is, that those who take their stand *pertinaciously* upon the formal theology of any given period, remain stationary, as it were, in the religious consciousness of this period, while that of the age itself goes so far beyond them, that their theology is no longer an adequate exponent of the religious life of the times, and can no longer satisfy its just demands. Since the time of the Reformation, the religious consciousness of Europe, unfolding the principles then started, has been advancing more and more towards the religious conception of Christianity; and in consequence of this we find the dogmatic theology of the earlier portions of this era unable to satisfy the moral and spiritual requirements of the present age. The effect of this is seen in the struggle which is manifestly taking place between those professed theologians who insist upon abiding strictly by the ideas, and even the phraseology of the past, and between the minds which represent the advancing spirit of the age, unchecked as they too often are by a due reverence for antiquity. Party struggles like these have unhappily the tendency

to drive both sides for a time into the extreme position of antagonism, so that the one falls back entirely upon ancient authority, while the other thoughtlessly sets it at defiance. The only consolation we have is, that truth always pursues its course midway between such extremes.

The phenomena of which we are now speaking have for some time past engaged the serious attention of enlightened men, many of whom have not been slow in perceiving their true solution. "It can never be repeated too often," says M. le Chevalier Bunsen, "that the Protestant Church, by regarding piety and morality as identical terms, by assuming the moral and religious feelings of man to be inseparably united in their deepest roots, has bound herself to discover and demonstrate the ethic exponent of every objective expression respecting the relation of man to God."* "And why," remarks the same author in another place,† "should we be shocked at the efforts of speculative minds to prove that there is a witness of the conscious spirit of man answering to the witness of history, and that there stands by the side of those facts of revelation which are the objects of our faith, an eternal truth and Divine law which God has made man capable of recognizing?" In fact, the demand that every doctrinal statement of Christianity respecting man's relation to God should have a moral or intuitional exponent, is simply the demand that it should be recognized as a living experience, and become perfectly reconciled to the universal conscience of mankind. There can be no desirableness in the doctrines of Christianity being ever regarded as propositions conveyed to us from heaven in the aggregate, and altogether impenetrable to the moral nature of man. Such a view of the case gives them no additional weight or authority, but rather *prevents* their appealing, as they were intended to ap-

* "Church of the Future," p. 33. † Ibid., p. 272.

peal, with their own native force to the intellect and the conscience of humanity at large.

As an example of what we mean by the penetration of theological doctrines with *moral idea*, we may refer to the great doctrine of justification by faith. Instead of this doctrine expressing the penal justification of a sinner by virtue of his assent to certain defined facts or propositions unconnected with a moral renewal, we may recognize in it, when duly expounded, a moral principle which was, in fact, the very life-spring of the Reformation. "The idea of faith," says a profound theologian from whom we have before quoted, "was primarily opposed to all those actions of ecclesiastical work-righteousness by which the hierarchy had been accustomed to fasten the moral feeling of the people down to the province of mere mechanical and outward duty, —opposed, consequently, to a system of works which (although, when regarded from without, it might contain much that was praiseworthy) yet stifled all true moral life by the demand of bare outward legality, and, consequently, destroyed all inward worth by implanting a false pride in the mere act of legal obedience. If only we add to this, that the circuit of duties enjoined by the Church as the price of salvation comprehended a multitude of purely material and pecuniary largesses to the clergy, who enjoined the most bitter self-denials to those who gave them, and hung over the heads of those who were really anxious for salvation a regular system of hierarchical rapacity; then, indeed, we can easily imagine the power of a doctrine which cut at the root of all these outward doings by the simple requisition of faith alone. No man, so ran the doctrine, can gain for himself any claim of merit before the face of the Holy God through his works only. For even the most zealous fulfilling of the law remains ever defective; even the best of human works are defiled with sin, and leave the conscience still open to

conviction of guilt. This guilt is only removed by an act of our deepest self-consciousness, by which we acknowledge our guilt to its full extent,—feel it with true sorrow,—seek honestly forgiveness, and the power of a new life,—find them *both* in reconciliation and redemption offered by God through Christ; and give ourselves up to it with unreserved confidence. This act is *faith;* and inasmuch as it is purely an act of the inward man, laying the foundation of a new system of feelings, and communicating a new principle of *life* in the fellowship with Christ, moral purity is here fixed upon its own proper foundation; the forgotten source of the soul's deepest life, from which every action should flow, is again opened, the wandering conscience brought into the right path, and Christendom, oppressed by those arbitrary burdens, relieved of the load. The believing man is termed *justified* before God; not as though God had poured out upon him any foreign righteousness, or by any act of magical transformation made a righteous man out of an unrighteous, &c.; but the believing subject is regarded by God as righteous *for the sake of his faith.* The long-suffering and merciful God takes the *principle* derived from fellowship with Christ, for the whole series of developments which will proceed organically from it; with his gracious eye he looks upon the *power* as though it was the whole sum of the consequent effects,—the germ and the bud, as though they were the mature fruit. . . . . On this *personal faith* rests, therefore, as upon its deepest foundation, that freedom of conscience which the Reformation gained for itself and the world. As a natural consequence of the doctrine of justification may be regarded the principles of free research into the Holy Scriptures, in which the whole Church *ought* to seek, what is for their own salvation, alike unfettered by the dogmas of priests or teachers."*

* "Der Deutsche Protestantismus," p. 30.

We do not intend to affirm, in advocating the moral exposition of the Christian dogmas, that such a reflective exposition is at all necessary in order that they may exert their power upon the human heart. Christianity itself, as we have abundantly shown, is not a *science*, but a *life*; it does not consist in any development of thought, but in the flow of holy affections. Times there have been when this inward life found an adequate expression in doctrinal statements less formed to harmonize with moral conviction,—when the soul was content with gazing upon the objects of Christian faith, as though with the earnest but unenlightened confidence of infancy. But it does not follow that the symbols of one age will satisfy the inward life of another; and assuredly the age which is now unfolding eminently demands of us to exhibit the historical and dogmatic elements of Christianity as being a great realization of the highest moral and religious intuition. In attempting to do this, we are not going beyond the instructions of the Bible, but simply leaving behind us the dogmatic theology of a former age. The Bible constantly encourages us to develope the moral significance of the Christian doctrines; it appeals often to the light within us; it is filled with suggestions that almost necessitate us to penetrate beyond the province of formal statements into the spiritual intensity of the whole system.

If any one brings against this view the charge of Rationalism, we reply, that he has a very incorrect notion of what Rationalism really is. The attempt of Rationalism is, to exhibit Christianity simply as a system of logical thought, based upon certain fundamental definitions, and erecting upon them a complete superstructure of doctrine. In this way Christianity becomes a body of purely human truth: it lies *entirely* within the limits of reason; it is absolutely subject to the laws of the human understanding;—while the historical element simply designates the time and the cir

cumstances in which it first began to be developed as a moral science. To all this, the view of Christianity we have presented is diametrically opposed. We have shown that it is a spiritual life; that it is based upon a direct revelation from God; that the office of the understanding in it is only formal; and that the historical fact is the actual realization of Divine and eternal truth.

Revealed truth assuredly is not *deteriorated* when we show its harmony with moral law. We may admire the order, harmony, and adaptation of *nature*, although we contemplate it simply as the mighty work of God; but how much more do we admire it, when we can comprehend the mathematical laws by which the whole is formed and governed! So also we may rejoice in Christianity as a stupendous exhibition of Divine goodness and mercy; but how much more so, when we see it all harmonized and arranged according to those eternal principles of moral truth by which the whole intelligent universe is regulated!

CHAPTER IX.

ON FELLOWSHIP.

In the preceding portions of this work, we have discussed the essential nature of religion as a universal phenomenon of the human mind; we have next investigated the nature of Christianity as one particular, and that the highest phase of the religious life; and lastly, we have shown the principles upon which religion seeks to embody itself in a scientific theology. In all this investigation we have proceeded from the more interior to the more exterior developments of the subject, coming at every step farther into the region of objective truth as presented in a clear and logical form. Having now completed these portions of the subject, we next proceed to discuss the manner in which religion realizes itself in outward communities; and this we shall accomplish by investigating the question of religious fellowship—first, as to its interior nature; and, secondly, as to its outward bond.

I. First, then, we must inquire into the *nature* and *design* of Christian fellowship.

No true believer in Christianity will be disposed to deny that the manifestation of Christ in the world forms a complete era in the history of its religious development. The exhibition there made of moral perfection,—the teaching which accompanied it,—the whole spiritual influence which was exerted upon the minds of the first disciples,—all combined to awaken in them a class of religious intuitions, and a body of religious experience, which gave at once a new

direction and a fresh impulse to man's spiritual life. In these intuitions were embodied, spontaneously and indistinctly, the whole of the subjective elements of Christianity; for it was when the understanding applied itself to them, when it verified their logical validity, and reduced them to a body of *doctrine*, that Christianity, as a *system*, appeared in the world: and it is by the application of the same intellectual process to these same intuitions in their historical growth, that Christianity has developed itself as a doctrine along the pathway of the ages.

Now, this religious consciousness being generic, not merely individual in its character, and partaking of that social nature which belongs to all our higher intuitions, could only realize itself in *communities*. The proofs of this are various. We might argue it, *first*, from the natural tendency which all the developments of the intuitional consciousness evince to unite together minds, similarly affected, in mutual sympathy. This very tendency indicates that certain social *conditions* are necessary for our higher intuitions to develope themselves, and become fully realized as a part of the inward life of humanity. Just as the tree sends forth its roots to gather nourishment from every side, so also when our spiritual emotions are once awakened, they seek the aid and support of fellowship; they essay to strike their roots deep into the common soil of humanity, and in this way to grow up like some vast tree into full and perfect proportions. The *religious* emotions, indeed, beyond all others, exhibit this tendency. Their strength, their tenderness, their whole social character is such, that they produce the strongest affinities, the most deeply-rooted friendships, the most irresistible attractions between minds which stand upon the same stage of religious impulse and idea.

Again, *secondly*, the necessary tendency of the religious emotions and intuitions to form human fellowship is seen from

the fact, that it is only by means of fellowship that they can evolve themselves into a distinct form of religion in the world. On this point we need not now insist, as it has been already shown and illustrated in the chapter on the essence of Christianity. We there proved that isolated religious emotions or experiences could only appear as isolated facts in human history; that they would be simply like transient flashes of inspiration, lightening up for a moment and dying away without originating any great practical system of human faith; and that Christianity, therefore, needed the aid and co-operation of the first communities to bring the germ of vitality from a potential to an actual existence,—to make the truth, which was in the Word, a living fact in the history of the world.

The necessity of fellowship in bringing Christianity to an actual realization, is seen *still further* in the social character of Christian duty. Did Christianity involve simply a state of spiritual contemplation, then we might imagine it to grow up into full dimensions in the undisturbed retirement of the Anchorite or the devotee. But such is far from being the case. Christianity is essentially *social* in its nature and its requisitions. In proof of this, take any list of Christian virtues, such as that given by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, where he says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," and consider how far such virtues could be maintained or cultivated except in a state of social life. Christianity may, indeed, exist apart from society, viewed as an abstract system of doctrine and precept, but not as a living concrete reality in the human consciousness. Whether, therefore, we consider the nature of the religious emotions, whether we consider their development into a vital system of human faith, or whether we consider the character of the duties which that system involves, we see it to be equally impossible for Christianity ever to have been realized

or unfolded in the world, except through the medium of human fellowship.

If these observations are correct, we may determine, without much difficulty, what is the interior nature of religious fellowship. It can have nothing *essentially* to do with formal laws, for these arise out of the practical necessities of communities, *after* they have been created; it cannot be dependent upon any outward institutions, for those institutions have all grown out of fellowship already cemented by Christian love; it cannot consist in the common profession of any defined doctrines, for all doctrine, logically considered, has been developed out of the very life and consciousness which fellowship has assisted to realize. The essential idea of Christian fellowship is concentrated in the hallowed unanimity of religious *feeling*, created by the common experience of that new and Divine *life* which was first awakened in man by Christ and his apostles. Wherever this Divine *consciousness* is so developed in the heart as to predominate over the modes of thinking and feeling common to the unchristianized world and the unsanctified mind, there is a member of Christ's spiritual kingdom: and wherever the sympathy produced by this inward Christian life is sufficiently strong to bring men into new relations, based upon these new ideas or emotions, there we see the essential germ of a true fellowship.

According to this view of the case, the design of Christian fellowship is threefold, namely, to develope, to preserve, and to propagate the Christian life. First, we say, the Christian life has to be *developed* by means of fellowship. The object of an immediate revelation from God, as we have already shown, is to impart those high and holy religious intuitions, in the enjoyment of which personal Christianity must be ever grounded. These experiences, however, of the inmost soul have to become realized as a great and divine *sys-*

tem of human faith and practice; and for this purpose the influences of social life are absolutely necessary. The function of a religious fellowship, accordingly, is not simply to contain the truth of God as a mere depository, neither is it intended to be merely a mechanical channel, along which the truth may flow down from one age to another; it possesses, on the contrary, an organic and vital power by which the germs of divine truth have to be *evolved* into their due moral and practical intensity; it is a body knit together by that which every joint supplieth,—the body of Christ; that, namely, whose soul and life is the divine idea of the Saviour himself, as a heavenly manifestation on earth. Every doctrine of Christianity has thus to be made replete with moral significancy; every precept to be spiritualized in its meaning and become universal in its applications; every feature of human society has to be moulded by Christian truth; and the whole edifice of human society to be built up in conformity to that system which is righteousness, justice, truth, and love.

But, secondly, the Christian life, when developed to a given degree of distinctness, has to be *preserved* by fellowship from diminution and decay. Christianity, as explained in the Bible, might, of course, be handed down from age to age in its mere formal and symbolical character by simply perpetuating the existence of a scientific theology, based upon the *letter* of the Word. But this is a totally different thing from preserving the inward and vital Christian consciousness as a great practical reality—a system of living faith and duty in the world. For this purpose fellowship is indispensably needful. Were the Christian ideas which are presented in the Bible to exist only in an isolated form in the mind of one and another, without the aid of intercourse or spiritual sympathy, they would be entirely wanting in that concentration which gives them a moral power, before which

the spirit of humanity bows in obedience and sacred awe. Under these circumstances, they would constantly diminish in intensity in proportion to the distance at which we so stand from the period of their primary inspiration; until, weakened by isolation and overrun by the pressure of material interests, the whole Christian life would sink and perish. Christianity, as a living power, must have an *historical existence and succession* from age to age; without such a succession in the consciousness of Christian communities it would gradually fade away and entirely disappear.

Lastly, Christianity has to be *propagated* by means of human fellowship. The propagation of Christianity as a moral power, is quite another thing from its inculcation as a formal doctrine. The latter may possibly be accomplished to any extent by an individual teacher, who takes his stand upon mere intellectual argumentation, appeals only to the logical faculty of his hearers, and seeks to *force* the assent of the understanding. With regard to the spread of Christianity, however, as a new and divine life, the case is far otherwise. Here the Christian consciousness must be awakened in the hearts of the indifferent or insensible, and to do this Christianity must be witnessed in its moral operation upon mankind. And how *can* this be fairly witnessed, except in the phenomena of Christian fellowship, and the activity of Christian co-operation for heavenly purposes? It is not by any means in proportion to the number, or the zeal, or eloquence of those who preach the *doctrines* of Christianity, that vital piety will make its way in the world; but it is precisely in proportion to the intensity with which the Church universally exhibits the purity and elevation of Christianity as a spiritual life.

To sum up these remarks, therefore, we may say, that the office of fellowship is first to realize the Christian life, and develope it into a complete system of vital energy; that

it has next to preserve it from being lost in the darkness of superstition or crushed under the power of gross materialism; that it has finally to propagate it amongst all the nations of mankind—and thus to prepare the immortal spirits of this our lower world for the communion of the world above. Such is the view we now propose of the nature and design of Christian communion, and which we place in direct opposition to the notion, that spiritual fellowships were intended or adapted to investigate truth *scientifically;* or to defend a certain system of formal doctrine; or to exert any other than a *moral* influence upon the world. The *Church* and the *school* are two ideas totally distinct; just in proportion as the former merges into the latter, will it ever lose its great power as an aid to the attainment of spiritual purity, and possess merely a speculative interest to mankind at large.

II. We now proceed to consider the outward bond of unity in Christian fellowship.

In the previous observations we have been engaged in discussing the essential principle of fellowship. The question now raised is respecting the *formal* principle. The real life and essence of fellowship is of a moral and spiritual, by no means of a speculative character; but this does not prevent the necessity of having fixed and definite principles, upon which the external form or organization of communities is to be based. A simple community of *feeling* will not serve as the practical bond of an outward and abiding institution. For this purpose we need some firm and solid principles of a purely practical description; principles which will stand against the brunt of manifold temptation, and remain immovable, though their base be washed for ages and centuries by that ever-flowing stream of time, which undermines all mere human things.

The bond of fellowship may be of two kinds; it may be, on the one hand, purely outward and formal; or it may in-

volve, on the other hand, a certain expression of religious life or opinion. With regard to the purely objective theories, it will not be necessary for us to dwell at any length upon them; since they are connected with other opinions which cannot be discussed in the present treatise. The two forms, in which this objective view of the question has been brought forward most prominently, are seen first in the *Roman Catholic* idea, and secondly in the *political* idea of fellowship. We touch upon these now, therefore, in few words, more for the sake of explanation than of refutation.

The formal principle of Catholicism rests entirely upon the general notion, that the Church implies necessarily an outward and historical succession,—that this succession is maintained by the unbroken chain of official authorities, sacramental observances, &c., and that the absolute condition of union with the kingdom of Christ, and consequently of all Christian fellowship, depends upon our connection with this historical constitution *formally* considered. This view of the case doubtlessly had its origin in the true idea of Catholicity, —that which rests upon the vital development of the Christian life, and the historical succession of the religious consciousness of the Church from age to age. But the Catholic theory of fellowship, instead of expressing this great and too frequently forgotten idea, has now materialized the whole conception; instead of making the Church a *living* organization, beyond the limits of which there is nought but spiritual darkness, it has set up an artificial boundary, marked off, not by any moral superiority, but by the due performance of rites and ceremonies. Accordingly, we find as the result of this theory, multitudes of the most debased, most unscrupulous, most anti-Christian of mankind, standing in due right and order, as channels of Christian truth to the world; while, on the other hand, we find multitudes of the humble, the holy, the self-denying, hopelessly thrust out beyond the pale of

brotherhood, as *not* being in the legitimate succession of official validity. If the fellowship of the faithful is to depend upon such principles as these, then to make it at all intelligible to the reason, or consistent with the moral sense of mankind, we need altogether a different interpretation of the whole nature and design of Christianity from what we have in the life of Christ and the writings of the apostles: and the philosophy of religion must be based upon principles altogether different from those we have already advocated.

The other objective theory of visible fellowship, to which we alluded, is the principle which makes a formal union with the Church of Christ to depend upon compliance with certain political regulations. In this case the spiritual character of the Church is not merely compromised, as in the Catholic system, but it is formally relinquished; she becomes now a mere tool in the secular schemes of human politics, and the behest of state authority is raised above the sacred rights of conscience and the laws of Christ. For the State to fix the conditions of Christian fellowship, and regulate the religious worship of the Church, is to admit the competency of merely secular rulers to decide as to what shall be, both in the present and for the future, the due expression of the religious life of the country,—as absurd in philosophy as it is fatal to all free and earnest religious development.

It is evident, then, that the real bond of fellowship must be in some sense a spiritual or a religious one. Even where a material bond is practically asserted, yet theoretically it is always attempted to give it a spiritual character. Romanism, although it would confine the fellowship of Christ within the limits of its own *outward* and *official* activity, yet consistently enough denies the existence of true religion beyond it. And State-Churchmen even of the strictest school tacitly repudiate the value of the political basis, either by recognizing the equal spiritual rights of the Nonconformist in the

fellowship of the Gospel, or advocating for themselves some peculiar religious claim, *beside* the mere fact of conformity.

If, then, a *spiritual* basis of fellowship is admitted, more or less, by universal consent to be essential, the main point we have to discuss is the precise nature of this spiritual basis,—whether it be of a *moral* or whether of a purely *theological* character. If the views we have already maintained upon the subject be correct, there cannot be much difficulty in determining this question with some approximate degree of certainty. The whole character and design of Christian fellowship, we have shown, is essentially moral and practical. The Church was never intended to possess any scientific authority, or to investigate truth in the light of a formal theory; she was intended to administer solely to the spiritual wants of mankind. This being the case she is not competent to give any authoritative decision upon systematic theology, or to determine by the weight of numbers what can only be really determined by logical exposition, or to decide upon any definite creed as the standing condition of religious fellowship. To do this would be to step without her real province; to assume a *scientific* function; to become virtually a *college*, not simply a *Church*.

That an individual community may adopt some definite statement of Christian doctrine as a matter of practical convenience, in order to give a definite expression to their particular religious life, we are far from disputing; but that a fixed theological *test* of fellowship should be laid down for a whole body of Christians scattered, perhaps, far and wide over the earth; and this not so much a matter of practical utility as an authoritative expression of doctrinal *truth*, this we regard as being contrary to the whole of the nature and the functions of the Church of Christ. Before we proceed any further, therefore, with an exposition of the true bond of outward fellowship, we shall state at large the grounds upon

which we reject the principle of placing a given dogmatic theology, authoritatively stated and enforced, at the threshold of all Christian communion with the visible Church.

1. We oppose a fixed logical basis, because there is no authority for it in the case of the apostolic Church. The bond of union amongst the early Churches was, the powerful awakening of the religious consciousness, originating in, and maintained by, an intense belief of the great facts connected with the life, the death, and the resurrection of Christ. That these Churches possessed, for a long time, no formal theology, is historically certain. In none of the writings of the New Testament is there any thing approaching to it except in those of St. Paul, and in these, the practical and intuitional elements immensely preponderate over the logical.* And even supposing that the teaching of the New Testament *did* contain a formal body of divinity, still it does not follow that this was intended to be the basis of Church union and fellowship. So far from that, the only Church symbol we can find that has any probability of having been recognized in apostolical times is that which is termed the apostles' creed—a symbol which is nought but a simple statement of belief in certain great fundamental facts, but in which not one single *doctrine* of Christianity, as that term is now understood, is *logically* stated. If Christian fellowship really existed in its most united, most active, most efficient form, before the period when the religious intuitions which first drew the disciples together were cast into the mould of a theological system; and if, when something approaching

* The dogmatic element in the apostolic teaching was, in fact, almost exclusively Jewish in form; their *intuitions* were purely Christian. On this principle alone, much of the logical reasoning of St. Paul is to be explained. Dr. Hampden denies to them altogether a dogmatic intention in the theological sense of that word.

to a system *was* realized, it was still unemployed as a necessary bond of visible communion, there certainly can be no authority from the apostolical Church, to advocate a fixed logical basis, as the essential foundation of our present communities.

2. We oppose a fixed logical basis, because the statements it involves do not contain any *essential* element of Christianity. Many a sincere Christian, no doubt, may be somewhat startled at this assertion; but it is one we make very deliberately, and which follows indeed, by necessary consequence, from the principles we have already deduced. The essence of Christianity, as we saw (Chap. IV.), is only cognizable directly by the power of the intuitional consciousness, for by it alone are we brought into direct sympathy and intercourse with divine *realities*. The truth which we thus acquire, is brought to us *immediately;* it implies the spontaneous perception of the spiritual object; and although this perception may be *dim* and incomplete, yet so far as it is developed *at all*, it must be valid and real. On the other hand, the moment we bring these intuitions into the form of logical statements, they do not *necessarily* involve any essential element of Christianity whatever. It is true, that, if the mind possess the intuitions fresh, and living *within*, and if the logical statement be veritably the reflective representation of them, as actually existing, such a statement *does* contain an essential element within it. But this essential element does not depend upon the logical form. So far from that, it may exist in all its intensity *without* it; while, in spite of the doctrinal form being complete, the *essence* may be utterly wanting.

We do not dispute the value of a dogmatical system of theology, nor deny that it answers many useful ends to the Church and the world; but, for all this, it cannot itself be made the basis, and the profession of it the condition, of visible fellowship, without involving at length the most unhappy,

and perhaps unexpected consequences. To the minds, who frame theological statements as the safeguards and depositaries of their religious intuitions, they may appear to be highly conservative of the truth; and so perhaps they will be, if rightly used. But once raise them from a subordinate into a *supreme* position; once make them the test of true Christianity; once constitute them the *condition* of Christian union or co-operation—and what results? The form becomes soon confounded with the essence, the logical statement with the living reality. The importance of mere symbols thus becomes exaggerated, while that of a deep inward experience grows less, until all vitality is lost, and the minds of thousands are cheated with the husk or the shell, when perhaps they imagine that they possess the living germ itself. "There is such a thing as a cant of orthodoxy, as well as a cant of fanaticism and hypocrisy. Persons may repeat certain phrases with a confidence that they understand them, in proportion to their real ignorance of their meaning, and without attaching indeed any distinct meaning to the terms which they repeat. The emphasis of their assertion of the theological truth is apt to become a snare to them; inducing the delusion, that those cannot but have a firm hold on what they profess, who are so stanch and so correct in making their profession. Their fluency in passing the watchwords of orthodoxy and their exact enunciation of its symbols, thus *re-act* on themselves injuriously. Their religion unconsciously to them becomes merely *verbal*. They take the sign for the thing; the counter for the money."*

In the above expression, "that the emphasis of assertion of any theological truth becomes a snare," we see the whole evil of making such formal statements the actual basis of

* Hampden's "Bampton Lectures," p. xxvi.

fellowship. No emphasis laid upon any doctrine can be so great as that which makes it a necessary condition of *union;* and in no other instance does it become so great a snare. To rally round points, which do not by any means imply an essential element of Christianity, is to put the form absolutely *before* the matter; and the necessary result in the long-run is, that the matter will pass away from the soul, and leave the dead and hollow form standing alone—the monument of a life, which *has been*, but is now, alas! gone into oblivion. Thus, so far from taking a *negative* position in our theory of Church fellowship, we are in fact striving against it. It is the system that lays such undue stress upon logical statements, which, as we shall soon show, is apt, nay sure, to lead into negations; it is the affirmation of the *religious life* as the main thing, which can alone keep our theology as well as our fellowship pure, practical, and positive.

3. We oppose a fixed logical basis, because the natural result of the logical consciousness, as applied to communities, is *diversity*, and not *unity*. Here we must refer our readers to that portion of our second chapter, in which the contrast between the logical and intuitional faculties, in this particular respect, is deduced and illustrated. It will be there seen, that the office of the former is to analyze, to separate, to distinguish qualities and attributes, to place them before us as abstract ideas; and that in the numberless shades of distinction, therefore, which result from this process, there is the amplest room for difference of opinion, without losing sight of the main subject. The tendency of intuition, on the contrary, is always towards *unity;* inasmuch as it neglects specific differences, and, whatever the subject may be, seeks directly to reach the central truth and the concrete reality. Now the specific ground on which the use of logical statements, as the basis of fellowship, has been maintained is, that they may bring all men, as far as possible, into one mode of

thinking on religious matters, and thus advance the visible unity of the Church. Instead, however, of subserving this end, it is *demonstrable*, that nothing else is so inevitably certain to create divisions. Whatever differences there may be in temperament, in the relative strength of the faculties, in the influence of education, in national or social peculiarities, all these differences are at once brought to bear upon the question of religious belief, the very moment we begin to cast our intuitions into a definitive and propositional form. Just in proportion to the intensity and vigor of the logical understanding, in that proportion it will always originate amongst mankind logical *differences;* definition will follow definition, proposition will be added to proposition, conclusion will be drawn after conclusion—and never will it be possible to get any considerable number of minds fully to coincide in any one set of logical statements, until they cease to *think* or reason about the question altogether, and receive them simply on the ground of bare authority.

Religious *intuitions* have just the contrary effect. They unite men in sympathy one with another; by means of intercommunication, this unity becomes greater and greater, for each one communicates somewhat *to* his neighbor, and receives equally *from* him; so that here, in the flow of holy feeling, desire, and contemplation, natural differences and logical variations are merged, lost, and forgotten. The more lively, intense, and active this inward religious *life* becomes, the stronger are its magnetic attractions, and the closer does it draw all to one common centre. On the other hand, the more purely logical men become, the more they involve themselves in endless scholastic disputes, which will cause a semblance of division even where there is real unity at heart.

But, further, supposing an agreement should after all be arrived at, respecting the terms of definition, yet still that

agreement is no guarantee for *real unity*. Men often *imagine*, that so soon as they can profess the same articles, then at length they are at one with each other. Nothing less. A thousand chances to one, but they have succeeded in associating each his own peculiar views, with the words in question; so that with a verbal unanimity there is as great an *actual* difference as ever. Men very rarely become *really* at one by means of logical discussion, they only become so when the increased religious life, from which all the material of such discussion is primarily drawn, blends them in real harmony the one with the other.

4. We oppose a fixed logical basis, because it tends inevitably to the gradual extinction of all that is *positive* in Christianity. As this is a practical objection, and one which admits of historical verification, we shall dwell upon it somewhat more largely than we have done upon the former particulars. To exhibit the mode in which a logical basis of Church union operates in producing the effects above stated, we will suppose a case for illustration. Imagine a Christian communion possessing in a large and happy measure the positive life of true religion. The lofty intuitions of the New Testament are vividly realized, the power of faith and love circulates freely from mind to mind, the whole Christian consciousness is elevated and pure. Imagine, next, the logical understanding to become active, the religious intuitions to be reduced to a reflective form, and a dogmatic theology to be completed according to the spirit of the age. Imagine, again, that some of the weightiest and most influential minds, more zealous than wise, and eager to retain their religious identity from age to age, propose to fence in their Christian fellowship by formal articles of faith, which should henceforth become a condition of union. The proposal is accepted, the doctrinal statements are accordingly fixed, and fixed perhaps without any great degree of difficulty or disputation. For a

little time all seems smooth and promising; the inward vitality has been so great, and the mutual unanimity in consequence of it so general, that it has well nigh repressed all tendency to differ about verbal statements, however great the temptation to do so. In lapse of time, however, the scene gradually changes; the influence of the world will again make itself felt; the infirmities of natural disposition will find cause for disagreement; and, what is still more, as the age rolls round, the formal articles, which expressed so accurately the religious consciousness of the period at which they were formed, do not continue to be by any means so precise a reflection of the inward reality. One mind becomes dissatisfied with *this* definition, another with *that;* here is a doctrine too pregnantly expressed, there too loosely; and just in proportion to the fulness and comprehensiveness of the original creed, and the logical sharpness of the distinctions, will there be the more probability of difference and disagreement arising.

Under these circumstances, what course is to be pursued? Some may say, retain the articles, and allow them to be subscribed with a mental reservation—that is, in other words, sanction hypocrisy for the sake of your logical definitions: retain them at all events, though it be at the expense of moral integrity. Against such principles, it is humiliating to argue.

If then this course is *not* pursued, what alternative lies open to be accepted? Evidently this. The articles must be modified to suit the case of the disaffected, for to thrust them out would be sure to lop off the most active, energetic, and living members of the whole community—those who find their religious life where only it can be found, in *spiritual progress*. This attempt, then, at modification, may serve the purpose of producing harmony for a time; but as sure as another age has rolled round, other differences will have ari-

sen, under the operation of the same causes as before; and a still further modification will be required. In brief, to satisfy all minds alike, the articles of faith must become more and more *negative;* one point after another must be weakened by equivocal expressions; and when the whole positive element is gone, and the system itself emasculated, then at length, and then only, may we look for *union* in the profession of a logical creed. Thus it is, that a community firmly united at first by the sympathy of positive Christianity, is led on, by the ever-pressing necessity of giving satisfaction to the speculative understanding, from one degree of degeneracy to another, until nought is left but a species of natural religion, which, as it can give expression to no man's religious individuality, fails to serve as a bond of fellowship at all, and thus leads to the virtual dissolution of the Church.

History gives us abundant verifications of the truth of this whole representation. Without dwelling upon the case of the Eastern Church, which, under the influence of metaphysical disputes upon theology, degenerated into a mixed heathenism and infidelity; without dwelling upon the effects of the scholastic spirit in the middle ages, which converted religious faith into dialectical controversy; we will refer simply to those Protestant communities which, in more recent times, have most strenuously upheld a fixed doctrinal basis of Church fellowship.

Let us turn, first of all, to the Lutheran Church of Germany. This Church was cradled in that intense excitement of the moral and spiritual nature which so remarkably characterized the period of the Reformation. Luther was the noble embodiment of that new religious life, and few men perhaps were ever less under the influence of formal dogmas than he. The more logical minds of the age, however, like that of Melancthon, impelled by the influence of their scholastic education, cast the burning thoughts, which were sponta-

neously stirring the very deepest elements of human nature, into the form of a doctrinal system, which afterwards, more honestly than wisely, they placed at the threshold of their new communion. The process of religious degeneracy in the subsequent ages is well known. These doctrinal forms and expressions soon became the great points of interest—the great centres of all their real mental activity; in that proportion religion itself lost its vital power; so that while the strictest orthodoxy was observed in the formularies, yet every thing showed that the moral thinking of the age had really no interest in them.* What was the consequence of this state of things? The public mind having ceased to interest itself in the Church theology, soon proved that its faith was simultaneously shaken in Christianity itself. The first assault of a vigorous philosophical Rationalism shattered into fragments the brittle texture of those logical systems which the pulpits had proclaimed in the place of living truths and moral ideas; and soon involved the whole country in a profession of Christianity which, from its purely negative character, differed by very small degrees from the barest naturalism.

There is no more fearful evil of a religious kind to be dreaded in any country, than when the masses of the people lose all interest and faith in the theological teaching of the clergy. Too many unhappily only see in this fact the necessity of enjoining a more unreserved belief in the *whole teaching* of the Church; they do not see that such a state of unbelief too surely proves that the teaching of the Church has lost its proper power to influence the human heart; and that faith will need no constraint and no injunction, where

* For a picture of the state of German Theology during this its dogmatic period, see M. Armand Sainte's "Histoire Critique du Rationalisme en Allemagne," Book I., chapters 7, 8, 9.

the Church really proclaims the truth of Christianity in demonstration of the Spirit, and with a vital power.

The spirit of Luther had been of this living kind; his influence upon the religion of his country was in consequence vast and enduring; but the formal theology which reached its climax under the dry and abstract teaching of the Wolfian philosophy, just when it seemed to fence in the whole circle of orthodoxy by the very nicest definitions, was in truth only preparing the way for the rationalistic infidelity of the succeeding age.

From the theology of Germany let us direct our attention to Geneva, the seat of Calvinistic Reformation. Here was a Church based originally upon the fullest statement of the Calvinistic creed, and enforcing it even by civil penalties. We all know its history. For a time, the catechism of that great Reformer was strictly adhered to; but by degrees it ceased accurately to express the real religious consciousness of the Church. Carried on one step after another by dissatisfaction with the dogmatic statements they were called upon to subscribe, the community passed through all the stages of modification which are usual in such cases, becoming more and more vague at every step, until it settled down in that almost negative form of Christianity which it retains to the present day,—a Christianity alike without life, and without power.

Were it necessary to do so, we could exhibit a similar course of events in the Reformed Churches of France and Holland; but waiving these, we shall come at once to our own country, and trace here the same effects as they flowed from the same causes. We are quite ready to render our heartfelt homage to the vigorous theological spirit of the early Puritan writers; they did their work nobly and completely, at a time too when it was most needed; they penetrated the mind of the country, which had been lying in the bosom of

the grossest ignorance, with genuine and earnest theological ideas; but their immediate successors, instead of striving to perpetuate the religious life of those holy men, strove rather to make their *scholastic system* a perpetual rule of faith, and a standing condition of fellowship. The consequence was that, as this system ceased to satisfy the religious growth of the age, one point after another was relaxed, until it produced first a lifeless orthodoxy, and at last a negative Unitarianism, such as the predominance of the critical element in the domain of theology invariably superinduces.

The moral firmness, the spiritual fervor, the whole Christian life of the English Puritans are eternal; eternal in their sublimity, eternal in their influence; never will they cease to act upon the mind and heart of our country; never will they cease to give us an example of the true basis of Christian fellowship. Would that in these respects their example had ever been followed, and their real religious life never been lost. But, instead of their progressive spirit being kept in view, it is their fixed logical system which is being perpetually extolled; it is their formal theology which so many are essaying to canonize; forgetful of the fact, that in this respect they had by no means the critical aids which we possess, and not perceiving that in resting implicitly upon others we are robbing ourselves of the very life which our forefathers possessed—the life, namely, which only results from the further development and organization of Christian ideas, into a deeper, intenser, and more comprehensive theory respecting man, the universe, and the Creator.

Whatever of life there is now in the religion of our country, we hold to be owing to causes quite distinct from the enforcement of a complete formal theology in the Confessions of our Churches. In the Church of England, true piety has developed itself far more through her prayers and such-like appeals to the deeper religious intuitions of the people, than

through the enforcement either of the Catechism or the Articles. The Nonconformist Churches, it is well known, owe their vitality to the development of a purely spontaneous and experimental piety coincident with the rise and the spread of Methodism; and lastly, Scotland, which, under the rigid inculcation of a formal Calvinistic theology on the part of the Church, had sunk into that dreary state of religious lethargy, from which various circumstances have now conspired *partially* to arouse it,—Scotland, I say, with its mechanical formalism and its vast under-currents of infidelity, will soon have to choose between the alternative of opposing a free and expansive theology to the pressing wants of the age, or relapsing deeper than ever into the moral death of a dialectical dogmatism, and all the dread results it ever brings in its train.

"It is worthy of remark," says Dr. Hampden, "that those Protestants who have advanced to extremes in opposing the errors of Rome, both those who have opposed them on the ground of superstition, and those who have been unreasonably jealous in the cause of Reason, have adopted more of the speculative method, connected with those errors, than the more moderate reformer. For what is all that accuracy and positiveness with which some persons state their views of justification, but the point and precision of *theory?* What is all the profession of rational religion, with which some maintain the natural efficacy of repentance, but a dogmatism founded on theory? We may learn from these extremes, that the more *indistinct* our language is on this sacred subject and the less of theoretic principle it embodies in it, the more closely do we imbibe the true spirit of Protestantism, the more faithfully do we walk in the path of that Holy Sprit whose ways are in the deep, and whose footsteps are not known."

5. We oppose a fixed logical basis, because it hinders the free development of the Christian life. The life of faith in

the individual depends upon his spiritual *progress*. Where there is an absolute stagnation of ideas from year to year, there can be no great activity in the higher religious faculties. All our intuitions, if real and healthy, will grow and expand. It is so also with the life of faith in individual communities, in the Universal Church, in the world. While the Church is thinking, developing truth, framing for itself spontaneously a more perfect and comprehensive theology, we see at once that there is life; but when she is stagnating as to her religious ideas and conceptions, when she has fixed herself down upon a determinate form of words, which may never be modified or outgrown, then we see the sure marks of inward spiritual destitution and death. Now this unhappy effect is naturally aided on by the inculcation of a fixed dogmatic theology as the basis of Christian communion. Such a theology throws a brace around the living consciousness of the Church; every vital movement is repressed, and the very means which were taken to retain the *letter* of the truth end in quenching its *spirit*, and cramping its power. Faith, in its true religious sense, is not an assent to formal propositions, but a spiritual *life;* and life in the soul, like all other life, implies a progress, the repressing of which tends to decay and death.

Such are some of the principal grounds upon which we reject the idea of placing a fixed logical basis at the threshold of Christian fellowship. The ground of all true union among Christians is to be found not in the common consent of the understanding to certain theological definitions, but in the common development of the intuitional consciousness as regards man's religious life. Such was the unity of the early Church. Between the Jew and the Christian there could be no real fellowship, inasmuch as the *Christian* life was altogether of a higher order than that which prevailed under the old dispensation; but there needed no articles of belief,

and no confessions of faith logically propounded, to knit the hearts of all the first disciples together in harmony and love. In this case the ground of fellowship was a holy unity of religious feeling, and such unity must be ours.

Now, the objection which many will be inclined to make to these principles is this:—that the profession of Christianity must become extremely negative, when it is based upon a foundation so vague as that we are now supposing. To this objection, however, we rejoin, that it is to *prevent* the religious life running into such negations that we advocate the views above stated. When a fixed standard is set up as binding upon a whole community, the tendency of it is to repress the force, the originality, the spontaneous warmth of Christian thought and expression in the individual, and lead to a mere formal and unimpressive maintenance of the dogmas thus imposed upon him. It is when the individual is left free from such formal trammels that he naturally becomes *positive*, and earnest in the expression of his faith and hope in the Gospel.

There is a very broad distinction to be drawn between a basis of fellowship viewed as the condition of communion, and the actual teaching of the minister, or the practical necessities of a single congregation. We do not mean, that, because the former should be theologically undefined, therefore the latter should be so too. We do not mean that theology in all its points and logical consecutiveness should not be proclaimed from the pulpit, or that actual congregations of Christian worshippers should base at once their worship and their Christian co-operation upon a mere undefined formula of Christian feeling. Just as every true Christian *man* must work according to his own individual type of the Christian life, which will inevitably express itself in his doctrinal belief, so also must every *congregation* act upon Christian principles which have assumed some distinctive

type, and are capable of some definite expression. All we mean is this, that Christian fellowship, *in the broad and extended sense*, should not be grounded upon a fixed theological basis, which is sure, in time, to create, and then to perpetuate, schisms in the whole body; but that every large community should consent to, and provide for, the expression of many individual phases of religious activity and formal theological opinion within its own pale.

In saying this, we are merely advocating the open and honest profession of that which all communities are obliged more or less to admit of tacitly. Where there is a very distinctive and sharply-defined theological confession at the foundation of any Christian fellowship, it is impossible to enforce complete agreement with it; or, if it be enforced, practical hypocrisy is the too certain result. How much more manly in spirit, how much more Christian in principle is it, that each man who takes upon him the vows of the Lord, should proclaim openly and earnestly his own deepest convictions, than be perpetually hiding them behind the phraseology of some authoritative standard. There is nothing we can conceive of more calculated to sap the foundations of true faith, nothing more certain to end in indifference and mere negative formalism, than the habit which theological strictness and intolerance has superinduced in many persons—of cherishing esoteric religious opinions which are only feebly and timidly declared, or not presented at all, in their public instruction. Were the expression of our real religious life left free to manifest itself in the Church and the world, we should find a much shorter road to real unity than can ever result from the constraints of authoritative confessions.

The true idea of fellowship is that of a living body, which grows up spontaneously from the smallest commencement to the full and perfect stature of a man. We shall attempt, therefore, to show how the Church can realize itself

on these principles, and how it can retain its true catholicity in connection with the most perfect freedom of the individual religious life. The primary movement of spiritual organization is seen, when the minds of two or three Christian men are drawn together by mutual sympathy so as to coincide in some concerted plan of devotion or pious activity. That such a coincidence of two or three earnest minds for prayer or for action enjoys the peculiar blessing attached to the Christian Church is evident from the declaration of our Saviour, where he says, "That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together *in my name*, there am I in the midst of them." A single assembly of men in *the name of Christ* (be it smaller or greater), where his commands are observed and his love prevails, is what we may term the *unit* of Church fellowship; it is one perfect stone in the spiritual temple, one perfect branch in the living vine, one perfect member in the mystical body; and every succeeding organic process is but a repetition of this upon a wider scale.

Such a community of minds, bound together by the similarity of their religious intuitions, forming, as they do, a perfect unit of Church fellowship, can scripturally act for their own spiritual welfare. For this purpose they are authorized to select their own spiritual teachers; to decree rites and ceremonies, not contrary to the Word of God; to fix the nature of their public services; and to agree, if they choose to do so, upon some common symbol or expression of religious faith, as was done by many of the early Churches with regard to the Apostles' Creed.

This adopted symbol need not be a complete formal statement of theological doctrine; it need not be regarded as a fixed and unchangeable confession of faith; it need not

be viewed as an indispensable condition of fellowship in a broader sense; it may be simply a "form of sound words" by which this *individual* community expresses its own religious individuality. Another community may adopt a different phraseology; a third a different one still: in this way every Christian man may find his own personal individuality expressed with sufficient accuracy not to hinder free communion and worship in some actual unit of Christian fellowship.

The perfection of the Christian character in a man is not to pare down his whole mental and moral constitution to some fixed standard, but to develope his own individuality, whatever it be, on Christian principles; so that the nature which God has given him, instead of being crushed, is expanded into its due proportions, the whole being purified by religion and love. And so is it with Christian communities. Each one must have its individuality,—and whatever tends to crush this at the expense of mere uniformity, will wound the tenderness of pure religious affection, and quench the smoking flax ere ever it can burst forth to a flame.

If, now, the real element of brotherly love exist in these *individual* communities, they will not be content to live in a state of religious isolation. The very same impulse which leads individuals to unite together in a single Church will carry forward the organic principle still farther; so that these various *units* of Church fellowship will form themselves into a wider community. Such a process, indeed, is necessary to the perfection of the Church on earth. For although we may say, that the whole essence of the Church exists in the unit, even as the whole essence of humanity in the individual, yet man isolated from his race forms not a more impotent spectacle than does a single unit of Christian fellowship, when severed from the whole life of the Church Catholic.

A number of individual Churches thus united for reli-

gious ends, and holding extensive intercourse with each other on fixed principles, will form, by the same spontaneous attraction of Christian sympathy, a larger community; and if such a community be coincident with the political divisions of the country, it forms *a National Church*. And this, in fact, is the only sense in which a Church can be truly national. A State Church is of easy formation, when power and wealth exist in the hands of a Government to create and endow it; but without the real assent and religious sympathy of the people, what is it but a fearful mockery of their deepest convictions? Were not the free and earnest convictions of a people fettered or distracted by canons and confessions with which they have no moral sympathy, their religion would ever *tend* to some unitary expression; and a Church truly national would be the result. On the other hand, the enforcement of fixed logical creeds, rituals, and dead forms, upon each community, necessarily gives rise to division and dissent, over which those who have produced it most unjustly and unreasonably complain.

The bond of union is this case would, of course, differ from that of the individual Church, being *more general*, just in proportion to the less clearly defined *individuality* which a wider community is intended to express. The individual Church will find it practically needful to adopt some form of religious doctrine which gives due distinctness to their inward life: but the wider community has to do more with the Christian spirit; to lay down the simple elements of vital *godliness;* to define the practical principles upon which the whole body is constituted. It has, in a word, to determine by its authority that for which alone authority is of any value, namely, the purity of our great spiritual *intuitions*, and the practical utility of our plans of broad Christian activity.

Then, finally, let there be one more effort of the organic principle of Christian love, and these various communities,

whether they be national Churches or not, will yearn after some vast realization of fellowship with the whole Christian world—a fellowship which shall counteract their individual evils, and lead to the establishment of a true and a spiritual catholicity. Only let unchristian assumption of superiority be renounced; only let the enforcement of human dogmas be relinquished; only let the Church freely develope itself under the mighty impulse of *love*, and what is to hinder the realization of a *pure* Catholicity—a Catholicity where the vital essence of Christianity is in common retained, while the individual forms are left undetermined, so as to express the peculiar religious life of every complete unit in the Catholic Church? The perfection of unity is that which we see in nature, and the universe, where there is the most beautiful harmony of design with infinite variety in the details. Such should be, and such eventually *must* be, the unity of the Church. The age of dull uniformity is already gone by; the struggle between those principles which would bind us down to it afresh, and those higher principles which seek for unity in freedom of soul, and in the development of each Christian individuality, is now going on. And oh! how beautiful the Church, how worthy of her espousals to Christ, when, in the free and healthy action of every mind,—in the fully evolved individuality of every Christian man, and of every Christian Church, there shall appear a new spiritual creation, which, like the old creation, shall reflect in its oneness of design, and its endless variety of development, the infinite resources of that *one God* from whom the whole plan has emanated, and whose ideas it strives to express!

Thus, then, in conclusion, we see that the organization of the Church of Christ resembles closely that of a living body, the correspondence between which, indeed, we look upon as something *more* than a metaphor. The first product of the vital or organic principle in the animal economy is the

formation of cells and tissue; and it is this same process *repeated*, which, at length, builds up the whole frame to its due proportions. The life which pervades the whole is each moment created and each moment renewed; and the harmony of the body consists, not in the exact uniformity of each part, but in the symmetry of the completed frame. So also in the true Church, it is the life-principle of holy love which binds together two or more Christian minds in sympathetic union; and the construction of the whole Catholic Church is nothing more than the repetition of the same influence, adding, as it were, cell to cell, and tissue to tissue, building up organ upon organ, and member upon member, until the "whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love,—growing up unto him in all things who is the Head, even *Christ*."

CHAPTER X.

ON CERTITUDE.

THERE is no question in the whole range of philosophy more deeply interesting in itself, and more widely practical in its legitimate consequences, than that which relates to the grounds of human certitude. This question viewed in its whole extent forms indeed the central point of the highest metaphysical investigations; nay, so close a bearing has it upon the real principles of human knowledge, that it is possible to make a complete classification of all the current metaphysical systems, according to the views which are entertained upon this one point.* It is not our purpose, however, to enter at present into the several philosophical theories which have been maintained on the grounds of human certitude generally. We shall simply state so much of our own theory on the subject as may be necessary to develope the true principles of certitude in reference specifically to religious truth.

There are two forms of knowing proper to man, or, in other words, two generic states or determinations of the human consciousness, in which an actual process of acquiring truth is involved; these are denoted by what we have termed

* See Lectures, by the Author, on the Philosophical Tendencies of the Age.

the *logical* and the *intuitional* faculties. Knowledge must be mediate or immediate. If it be mediate it implies some previous idea to which it is referred, and from which evolved; if it be immediate it simply indicates the *direct* perception of some objective reality, standing at once face to face with the subject *self*. Certitude, therefore, as arising from the legitimate action of the faculties, may be of three kinds; it may be purely logical, or purely intuitional, or a mixed result of both.

Logical certitude simply implies the validity of certain *relations*, arising immediately out of the laws of thought. Hence, it is entirely hypothetical in its nature, asserting no reality out of ourselves, but simply affirming, that, if such and such conditions exist, then such and such results will follow, according to the principles of logic innate in the human mind. To express an entire absence of all *matter*, we may use the symbols A, B, and C, as terms in a formal syllogism. Then we can say, if every A is B and every B is C, every A must be C likewise. Here we have what may be termed formal certitude,—a certitude which is simply the reflection of certain laws of thought, which is entirely subjective in its whole nature, which would be equally true were *the me* absolutely alone in the infinity of space with no universe around it.

Intuitional certitude is entirely different from this: it involves no hypothesis; it implies no forms of thought; it has no reference to any thing previously asserted; but simply affirms positively and categorically an objective existence. Truth in this view of the case is not the logical consistency between ideas; it is not the conformity of our ideas with the outward reality; it is nothing whatever involving any comparison between an internal phenomenon and an external existence; truth in the intuitional sense is *being*—being manifest-

ing itself to the human mind—being gazed upon immediately by the eye of the soul.*

The most important and the most difficult case of certitude is that in which the testimony of intuition is blended with a logical inference or definition; since there is *here* abundant facility for error to creep in unawares and vitiate the whole result. The intuitional faculty, as we have before shown, is not absolutely perfect, otherwise we should see truth immediately as God himself sees it, in its whole concrete unity. The perception of it is affected by disturbing causes within ourselves, not so far indeed generally as to prevent the affirmation of a *reality* of some kind, but so as to prevent, in many instances, the affirmation of that reality in its complete and unalterable distinctness. There are some cases indeed (those which refer to the more universal necessities of man in his earthly existence) in which the intuition we enjoy is very explicit, in which a universal agreement is at once perceptible, or, at any rate, in which attention only needs to be roused and concentrated upon the subject, for an extremely clear and unwavering consciousness to spring up within the mind of the percipient. Such are the intuitions of time, space, number, &c., upon which the mathematical and mechanical sciences are grounded. In these instances there is little difficulty, comparatively speaking, in fixing upon some definitive expression of the intuitions involved, and of course a corresponding guarantee against error in the reasonings which are founded upon them.

Intuitions, it should be observed, can only exist complete in the interior consciousness of the percipient; they cannot

* This idea may be termed the "pons asinorum" of metaphysics. It is the key to the whole question of *perception*, as well as to the higher question of special realities. In reference to the former, *vide* Hamilton's Reid. Notes. In reference to the theory in its more universal bearing, consult M. Franke's report, "De la Certitude."

be *wholly* expressed or defined. When, however, there are any which are realized distinctively and uniformly by a number of thinking men, that uniformity can be easily recognized in a variety of methods; and a common sign or definition can then be agreed upon, which may sufficiently express them to those in whom the experience has been created, though not by any means sufficiently to others.

Every intuition manifests *a reality* so far as it goes; but when that reality is only perceived dimly and uncertainly, it is impossible to get *such* an expression of it as shall satisfy the requisitions of certitude, or be adequate, as a *datum*, for logical reasoning. The experience of other minds does not, in this case, at once respond to it; there is a coloring in it, or at least in its expression, derived from the idiosyncrasies of the individual; and the results drawn from it in this its partial and imperfect form may depart very widely from the truth itself.

Hence the necessity arises for our having certain *criteria* by which we may judge whether a given intuition, when realized and expressed, is so distinct and adequate as to be immediately recognized by other properly developed minds,—and thus to serve the purpose of a fixed and abiding conception of the objective reality. The three great criteria, which have been ofttimes recognized by philosophical thinkers, are, *distinctness*, *uniformity*, and *universality*. When an intuition has attained to such a state that its simplest expression is recognized as conveying an idea perfectly distinct—an idea which is invariably the same—an idea, lastly, which is universally drawn forth from the human soul when placed under the proper conditions of development—and which is finally verified by the consistency of all its practical deductions, then we regard it as possessing the marks of certitude, so far, indeed, as human certitude can at all exist.

These criteria of certitude, for example, hold good in re-

gard to the perceptions of the senses. We express ourselves respecting these perceptions in such a manner that every one recognizes them as perfectly distinct: we are conscious, still further, that they never vary while our organs are in a normal state; and lastly, we find that all mankind have universally the same experience respecting them, and deduce the same conclusions from them.

It is in the case of those objects, however, which lie beyond the reach of the senses, that such criteria are more necessary to be applied. It is true, that a given intuition may be so distinct and unvarying to an individual mind, that it carries with it its own evidence of veracity; but this will not answer as a ground of certainty to all mankind. An objective reality may be most perfectly unfolded to the perception of some mind highly wrought and specially developed for the purpose, and that mind may feel it *impossible* to doubt it, any more than we do the evidence of sense; but the minds of others may not yet be in a state to recognize the same reality with the same degree of distinctness and uniformity. In this case, the individual thus favored must enjoy his own evidence; but the rest of mankind must wait the purification and development of their own power of spiritual perception, ere the intuition can be so expressed as to bear the criteria of *universal certitude*.

When this kind of validity is obtained,—when an inward intuition has been expressed, and its criteria recognized, then already we have a case of *mixed certitude*, a case in which the logical and intuitional faculties are joined in the whole result. The very *expression* of an inward experience, so as to serve the purpose of scientific truth, involves a reflective or logical process; and it is needless to say, that every inference drawn from it, when expressed, must be drawn *logically* also. Hence we may conclude, that mixed certitude is attained first in every case in which our intuitions are

brought to a reflective expression, containing the proper criteria; and secondly, in every case in which conclusions are drawn from them with perfect logical accuracy, either by an inductive or a deductive process.

In summing up, then, our remarks upon certitude, we may say, that it is, first, *formal*, or *logical;* in which case it can serve no practical purpose directly, but merely give us an *organum*, or *method*, for the infallible attainment of results when sufficient data are afforded. Secondly, *material*, or *intuitional;* in which case there may be possibly the most perfect assurance given to the individual percipient, but no evidence afforded of truth to other minds. Thirdly, a mixed certitude of both descriptions; in which there is a scientific validity given to our conceptions, their due expression being tested by the criteria above referred to.

Whatever we accept *beyond* this, comes under the head of *probability*. The amount of probability may, of course, be infinitely varied: it may come just within the line which makes a statement rather to be accepted than altogether rejected; or it may be so strong as to approach indefinitely near to certitude itself, and for all practical purposes may be considered as equivalent to it, like the asymptote to a curve, which is ever approaching nearer and nearer to a given line, but can never absolutely coincide with it. Such, for example, are all statements which rest upon the evidence of *testimony:* the probability here may be as near the *limits* of actual demonstration as may well be conceived; never can it amount, however, to demonstration itself, — which would imply, either that the object testified had been actually experienced by us, or that it is a logical conclusion from certain fixed and acknowledged data.

Having given, in the outset, these brief explanations on the questions of certitude generally, we must now show their bearing upon the particular case of religious truth.

We have before seen how a distinctive form of the religious life is *realized* through the agency of human fellowship,—that is, in other words, how a given development of spiritual *intuition* is brought into a state of historical actualization within the mind or consciousness of humanity. We have seen, likewise, the nature of the process by which a formal theology is produced,—namely, by reflection upon the elements involved in the religious consciousness. But now we find, as a matter of undeniable *fact*, that different communities within the range of Christianity actually evolve different shades or phases of the religious life, and express their consciousness of Christian truth in such a way as to give rise to different systems of Christian theology. An ardent lover of truth, therefore, who is sufficiently instructed, and sufficiently free from educational prejudice to look calmly and thoughtfully round him upon the religious phenomena, and the theological science of the whole Church on earth, will be deeply moved to the inquiry,—Where is *the truth* to be found, and how is it to be realized in its full objective validity? Each eager partisan of some particular system claims with like tenacity to have the fulness of truth on his own side; is there not, therefore, some *higher* process, lying *beyond* the traditionary system of separate communities, by which we can come to a more *uniform* and *intelligent* kind of certitude,—a certitude upon which the most morally earnest and yet critically reflective minds may repose with satisfaction and peace,—a certitude which shall not be merely adapted to a party, but shall necessarily carry with it the suffrages of all upright and clear-sighted thinkers? Such is the question which now claims to be discussed with all freedom of thought, but with all earnestness of purpose.

To clear the way for a better solution of the problem, we shall commence by making a classification of the theories

of religious certitude, already practically acknowledged, and briefly testing their relative merits.

I. And first, we shall notice the theory which asserts, that Christianity is simply a question of *facts;* that these facts are such as to be palpable to the senses; and that we have now simply to receive them upon the ground of historical testimony. This theory (if it deserves, indeed, the name) rests upon an entire confusion of thought as to what a fact palpable to the senses really is; and what, beside the fact itself, is necessary for the existence of *religious* truth. Admitting that there are numerous facts connected with the institution of Christianity which the senses were able to attest; yet these facts, viewed merely as *outward events*, have no religious element attached to them; they can only have any, even the slightest reference to our religious nature, by virtue of the ideas which they embody, and upon which their whole spiritual value to any mind is based. On this point, however, we have already touched in a previous chapter, and may therefore forbear at present to pursue it any further. We shall simply concentrate the argument in a few remarks.

We remark, first, that, to regard Christianity as a question of *facts*, and make its certitude rest upon this basis, is eluding the whole point and stringency of the question; inasmuch as these *facts* are not resolved into their real elements, nor the grounds of their *religious value* exhibited. 2dly, That when an analysis of these facts is once made, we become conscious, that, to refer to the *senses* as the basis of religious certitude, is to pass by the whole *spiritual essence* of Christianity altogether, and deny that in this respect Christianity possesses any evidence at all. 3dly, That this theory of religious certitude holds the same relation to Christianity that positivism does to philosophy; that just as positivism is not a philosophy, but the negation of philosophy,

so the appeal to the senses, instead of giving us the basis of a religion, becomes in the end the denial of religion altogether.

The particular case in which *testimony* is made the basis of certitude, is included in the theory above refuted. Testimony can only refer *to facts*, and can have no validity as evidence beyond the value of the facts to which it testifies. The authenticity of a book, for example, can be known by testimony; its title to a Divine origin must rest upon grounds *entirely different*. Again, the reality of a miracle can be known by testimony; the force of that miracle, as evidence of any doctrine, is another question altogether. Accordingly, while testimony is necessary to assure us of the *historical genuineness* of the Bible, our reason for believing it to be the book of God, on the other hand, has nothing whatever to do with mere testimony itself, but is an *inference* made either from the facts recorded, or from the internal evidence of its divinity. The very most that testimony can do is, to place us in the same position as the persons who witnessed the facts in question; and just as those persons accepted the spiritual truth conveyed to them on grounds with which testimony had nothing to do (because it did not in *their* case intervene), so also must we accept the truth, *not* because the witnesses asserted their belief of it, but because we have the same grounds for belief presented to us, *upon testimony*, as they had directly presented through the senses. This leads us to consider,—

II. That theory of religious certitude which bases itself upon the *intellect*. The mere presentation of outward facts, it is evident to every reflecting mind, cannot give us the entire groundwork of a religion, viewed as a spiritual system of truth and duty; it can, at the very most, only give us phenomena from which such a system is evolved, or in which the truth revealed immediately to the mind is *embodied*. When, in the ordinary development of human knowledge,

facts are presented to us through the medium of perception, we never remain content with the bare observation of them, or with the mere consciousness of their existence; we always bring an inward faculty into operation, and seek by its means to have the perceived phenomena *reflectively interpreted and explained.* Just as the senses, when we gaze upwards upon the starry heavens, merely present us with a multitude of twinkling gems of light, which *reason* at length assures us to be suns, worlds, and systems; so also, in every region of human pursuit the senses merely give us a vague impression, which does not amount to reflective knowledge at all,—while it is the reason within us which discerns what the relation of things really is, and forms, consequently, as it were, an inner court to which the senses must ever appeal.

The necessity of this appeal is still further strengthened, when we have to receive the facts upon the testimony of others. In this case, we must not only interpret the significancy of the facts themselves, but the validity of the evidence on which they rest; that is, we must consider whether the witnesses were morally and intellectually qualified for their office, and whether the things they testify are of such a nature as to preclude all possibility of self-deception. Putting, therefore, all these considerations together, we see a strong case *apparently* presented for making the human intellect, critically considered, the standard of truth, and basing religious certitude, as well as all other, upon its final decision. This theory is the one which is generally designated by the term *Rationalism*, although, as we shall soon perceive, that expression does not by any means bear a uniform meaning.

Rationalism, in its most obvious and superficial acceptation (rationalismus vulgaris), is that mode of viewing the nature and grounds of religious truth, which accounts no-

thing to be valid that cannot be verified by the obvious laws and processes of the human reason: or, to use the expression of Röhr—Rationalism indicates "a mode of thinking applicable to every province of thought and knowledge, the principle of which is to hold nothing as certain which cannot really prove itself to be so by the most clear and indubitable evidences of reason." It is separated, therefore, on the one hand, from Supernaturalism by not recognizing any ground of certitude distinct from rational evidence; and, on the other hand, from Naturalism, by admitting a divine revelation, but one which must be entirely judged of by the laws of the human understanding.

The arguments by which the Rationalist maintains his position are many and various. He argues that, as reason is the supreme organ of truth, whose claims are recognized universally by the other faculties, it is unreasonable to allow it to be crushed under any supposed authority which it can itself alone verify: that the very laws of the understanding *require* us to suppose a natural cause for every phenomenon, and, consequently, to reject any such phenomenon as authentic, for which no natural cause can be assigned: that as many religions lay claim to possessing a revelation, reason must be our last appeal to decide *which* of those claims are correct: that since all revelation rests upon historical testimony, wrapped in the clouds of distant antiquity, it cannot possibly bring complete certitude to the understanding: that what lies above the reason, so that we cannot in any way penetrate it, is either contrary to reason, or at least totally *void* of significancy: that to constitute revelation a last appeal is a vicious circle, for we make the Scriptures historically prove the inspiration, while their own credibility rests upon the fact of their being inspired: that science in its progress has resolved many of the miracles into effects from natural causes, and that in due time all will be explained in

the same way: that the most complete knowledge of nature can alone affirm that any given fact does *not* flow from its proper laws; consequently, it is impossible that the divine wisdom should offer any thing upon supernatural grounds, the validity of which we can never fully prove: and, lastly, that as the whole genius of Christianity is in strict accordance with reason, it is useless to bring supernatural evidences to bear upon it, while the actual introduction of them, to the detriment of reason, has ever been followed by fanaticism, and superstitious fears.*

Now this whole course of reasoning most evidently rests upon a defective analysis of what is meant by reason, and, consequently, upon an equally deficient statement of the laws and principles of human certitude. Reason is here taken indefinitely as the faculty of judging between the true and the false. There is a kind of natural power supposed to exist within it of comprehending and testing the fitness of things; and every pretension to authority, of whatever kind, is to be brought before this inward tribunal, that its claims may be decided. The natural and unanswerable reply to all these and similar arguments of the rationalist is—how do you know that the principles upon which your judgments are grounded are valid? on what grounds do you arrogate to yourself the power of testing the fitness of things? what fixed standard is there within your own minds to which they can all be summoned, and their agreement with truth itself decided? Nay, we may further add, is not the plea of human ignorance, which you raise against the necessity of the Christian miracles, a tacit acknowledgment that your own standard of reason may be very imperfect, and that it is very unfit, therefore, to set itself up as the supreme judge of truth?

The standard within the mind of any given individual

* On these objections, see Hase, "Dogmatisches Repertorium," sec. 35.

must, in fact, depend entirely upon the mode in which he views truth *as a whole*—upon the character of his philosophy —upon his own peculiar theory of the universe. That this is the case is not only evident from *reflection*, but is equally verified by *facts*. Every system of philosophy which arises, gives a different statement of the principles and the scope of what is indefinitely termed *reason;* one is sensational in its tendency, another transcendental: one would reject a fact as totally beyond the laws of nature, which another would accept as perfectly consonant with them. Accordingly, we find that when once the question of certitude in religion is set afloat upon the ever-changing tide of human reason, in this its *individual* character, theory after theory springs up, and system after system, each proposing its own standard of what is rational, but never giving any final resting-place, or a definite basis of certitude to the human mind.

This process has been historically realized in the theological phenomena of Germany. The early Rationalism of that country was precisely of the indefinite kind we have already described. Allied on the one hand with the sensationalism of the French school, on the other hand with the dogmatism of the Leibnizian-Wolfian, it evolved results as contradictory as the spirit of these two systems was opposite. When the gigantic mind of Kant arose, and threw its influence into the discordant philosophical elements of his country, the whole view of the power and scope of the human mind was speedily changed. The speculative reason which had assumed the highest place as the great organ of truth to man, was startled by the paradoxes in which it saw itself involved; and Rationalism, which hitherto proceeded securely and confidently in pronouncing its critical decisions, was driven away from the province of speculation, as incapable of affording certitude, into the region of *moral law*, the sphere of the *practical* reason.

That the moral theology of Kant contained noble elements of truth, none can deny; that it produced a highly beneficial effect in curbing the extravagance of shallow speculation, and bringing the mind of his country to the earnest contemplation of the great moral elements of man's existence, is a matter of historical fact; but, with all this, the theoretical portion of the Kantian philosophy contained the elements of speculative skepticism, which were sure to have their effect upon scientific theology. Whilst, therefore, the purely moral truth to which Christianity itself ever appeals, was maintained with unanswerable power in the Kantian philosophy, yet, Christianity itself, as a fact of history, and a phenomenon of the human mind, was exposed to all the criticism of the speculative reason, and to all the uncertainties in which, according to Kant, that speculative reason, when applied to questions of objective reality, involves us. *Here*, there was no fixed principle of certitude pointed out; but, instead of this, a principle of skepticism very distinctly involved.

The historical results of Kant's philosophy prove to us most unquestionably the truth of this representation. Whilst its *practical* side, as we just remarked, subserved greatly the interests of true morality, its speculative side evolved those sweeping systems of subjective idealism, which drew the truths of Christianity, along with every thing else, into one vast chain of *à priori* reasoning, and stripped it at once of all its objective validity. In Hegel, Christianity became entirely sublimated into a dialectical development of ideas; so that his philosophy of religion, as applied to theology by Marheineke, is no other than the doctrine of the Church made one with the scientific development of the logical consciousness through the perfect realization of the laws of thought. It needed only the speculative keenness of a Strauss and a Feuerbach to cut off the objective reality from religion alto-

gether, and to make the whole but the natural striving of humanity to realize its own dignity, and pay its adoration to a shrine, of which itself is at once the deity and the worshipper. Ruge and Stirner may be considered as the *extremes* of this school. They have at length turned the weapons of the critic against himself, and declared that *criticism itself* belongs to that class of follies which have been now overcome. What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? Live, and let live. Enjoy yourself while you can; consider pleasure the *summum bonum* of human existence. Thus the cycle has gone round, until we find that the *morale* of extreme idealism coincides perfectly with that of the materialistic school of Helvetius and Volney.

Now all these systems of Rationalism, though differing widely in many other respects, yet agree in throwing the question of religious certitude upon the *individual reason*. This individual reason, as we saw in our second chapter, is identical with the logical faculty; and however unerring it may be in its judgments upon the form and relative consistency of our knowledge, yet it *entirely* fails in supplying us with primary data. Hegel, as we before remarked, has shown to the very uttermost what the *logical* reason *can* do in the search for fundamental truth; but he has also shown with equal clearness what it cannot. Rest upon this, and we must either *tacitly* assume certain data to start with, leaving their accuracy to mere chance; or we shall build up a whole system of mere logical forms, and sublimate the entire range of human knowledge into a dialectical *method*.

If we only apply the principles of certitude, laid down at the commencement of the present chapter, to the forms of Rationalism already cited, we see at once the entire incompetency of their pretensions. Certitude, we there saw, must be either intuitional or logical, for if it be *mixed*, still the elements must be mediated by processes of one or other of these

two kinds. But in these different rationalistic systems, certitude, as we saw, is based upon the most discordant principles; *formal* certitude being ofttimes confounded with *material*, and no distinction being maintained between the process by which we come in contact with objective realities, and that by which we judge of logical consistency. In the "vulgar Rationalism" of Germany, for example, (a species of Rationalism, indeed, which is common, more or less, to all countries,) there was never any *distinct* idea attached to the term *reason* at all; intuitional and logical elements were thrown together in utter confusion, and the indefinite result, termed by them "*Common sense*," was made the supreme judge of all truth. What guarantee had these all-confident critics, that there may not be whole regions of objective truth laid open to the eye of a soul more highly spiritualized than their own? That *reason* on which they relied was, in fact, but a poor and narrow *individualism*, to which no final certitude can be ever attached beyond the mere processes of logical inference.

The Rationalism of Kant differed in many respects from this. That great thinker saw keenly enough through all the hollow pretensions of "enlightened reason" in the vulgar acceptation of that term; and in one department of his philosophy at least, pointed to the real and immovable principles of human certitude. From the region of moral truth, he separated altogether the action of the mere speculative understanding, and grounded the majesty of moral *law* upon those immediate intuitions of the human soul, the direct evidence of which is seen in the whole practical constitution of human life. But here he stopped short: he appeared not to have seen that the phenomena of the *religious life* are as real a part of the actual experience of mankind, as are those of his *moral life;* and that to an awakened mind, their evidence becomes at length equally valid and distinct.

With regard to the Rationalism, which has sprung out of the idealistic philosophy of Germany, it has merged the Intuitional entirely into the Logical, until it has ended by pronouncing religion, yea, and God himself, nought but the projected shadow of our own forms of thought. And such are ever the negative results to which *mere* criticism incessantly tends. The more the grounds of religious certitude are removed from our intuitional consciousness and thrown entirely upon the logical, the more does the whole of our theology become a mere formal construction of hollow terms and symbols, to which nought but a logical or hypothetical certitude can ever be attached. We may gain in this way indeed a scientific *method* for theology, but we lose all the concrete essence of our *religion*.

In fine, the great and decisive *defect* in all Rationalism, viewed as a basis of religious certitude, is its perpetual *variability*. The whole history of its progress is a history of clashing differences and endless disagreements. Even those who are least able to enter critically into its nature are perfectly able to appreciate this palpable objection; whilst the moral limit to which it ever tends in the popular mind is the notion that every man is right who acts on his own convictions; that the standard of the individual judgment is to every man the final standard of truth; and that truth, objectively considered, is a mere fiction after which it is a delusion to strive. This principle, when clearly realized, is identical with *absolute skepticism;* truth and opinion here become one; and all moral as well as religious earnestness is utterly sunk in that perfect indifference which is the sure result of such a confusion.

In the view we have taken of the real principles of certitude, this tendency of Rationalism to interminable variation is made apparent, and the grounds of it clearly explained. The data of all our knowledge are *revealed* to us in

the intuitional consciousness; this revelation being entirely neglected by the Rationalist, no means being employed to realize it in its fulness, no appeal being made to the consciousness of others to correct or verify the possible distortions of his own, no stress, in fine, being laid upon the moral or spiritual development of the mind as an absolute condition to the appreciation of moral or spiritual truth; what result could we anticipate but an endless diversity? The actual data on which the individual judgment has here to act are perfectly at *variance;* they are either assumed by every man according to his own perceptions, without any consideration as to their validity, as in the common Rationalism; or else they are laid down in the most abstract and formal manner, and a succession of inferences involved, which have a mere logical connection, but all alike wanting in moral life or spiritual reality. In a word, Rationalism rejects *a Divine revelation*, as the basis of religious certitude, and then can never raise itself beyond the cavils and contentions of mere *individual opinion*.

III. We come now to a third hypothesis concerning certitude, in the domain of religious truth, and that is the principle of *tradition*.

This principle stands at precisely the opposite extreme from the one we last considered. Logical Rationalism tends to view all certitude as vested entirely in the individual; the theory of tradition, on the other hand, reduces the authority of the individual reason to a virtual *nonentity*, and regards the whole of the elements of man's religious life as something brought to him *entire* from an objective source. To analyze fully the theory of tradition, we must commence by looking at it in its simplest form, and then trace it up, step by step, to its highest expression. In this way we shall test its validity in every way, and see whether or not it merges *finally* into some higher principle.

The simplest form of tradition is that of the child imbibing its first ideas from the words of the parent. Here we see the most perfect trust in authority; for the natural tendency of the infant mind is to regard the knowledge of the parent as absolutely complete and infallible. What, then, we inquire, is the positive value of parental tradition as a source of truth and of certitude? The answer to this is almost self-evident. As far as the child is concerned, it must be looked upon as *highly valuable;* valuable, indeed, just in proportion to the superiority of parental knowledge, as at once prompted and corrected by much experience in the world, over the first crude and fantastic conceptions of childhood. On the other hand, as a ground of certitude, *absolutely* and *philosophically* considered, parental tradition must be entirely worthless. The parent can convey no more to the child than exists in himself, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred his instructions will be merely the echo of some prevailing form of dogmatism, seasoned and perchance still further distorted by his own idiosyncrasies. The value of this primary form of tradition, therefore, is *purely relative;* it is a value which arises not from its own intrinsic trustworthiness, but from the character of the *recipient,* for whose utter ignorance it is intended to compensate.

As the child advances in maturity, the idea of parental infallibility gradually declines. The parent, to support his own opinion, appeals to the authority of others, variously expressed; so that the pupil can now feel himself placed *virtually* on a level with his first instructor, and having exhausted *his* authority proceeds in company with him to some higher authority still. The tradition which is generally accepted next after that of the parent is the tradition of some religious community, most probably of *that* to which the parent himself belongs. By many it is asserted, that this living voice of the Church is a valid principle of religious cer-

titude, coming down as it does with echoes from an Apostolic antiquity. Against the tradition of separate communities, however, being regarded as a final appeal, there lies this most fatal objection—that every separate community gives us, in many respects, different results, for each of which they equally plead the highest authority. It would be necessary, therefore, in seeking a final appeal, to determine which, out of all these communities, is right; and to determine this there must be some *other* and higher principle of certitude—some imperium in imperio—which would evidently supersede the finality of the tradition itself. But to this it might be rejoined, that there is such a thing as a *Catholic* tradition, and that if we strip away the points in which communities differ, and just grasp hold upon those to which we can apply the test, "quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus," then we rise above the necessity of any other court of appeal, and retain that which rests upon the *universal* testimony of the Church. "Now there can be no doubt but that in proportion as large masses of minds, placed moreover in different circumstances, and educated under varying influences, have *agreed*, as by common consent, in the maintenance of any particular sentiments, in that proportion there is a prestige of veracity in their favor; but to make this common, or, as it is called, catholic tradition, a *final appeal*, is a procedure which will by no means stand the test of a close examination, for—

"1. Amidst the whole mass of floating tradition, who is to decide what part of it is *really* catholic, and what is *partial*, and consequently untrustworthy? Here we must do one of two things,—either we must throw ourselves upon the decision of the individual reason to settle this point, or we must look for some other authority to do so; in either of which cases we relinquish tradition itself, although it be catholic, as our highest appeal, and introduce some other

principle of certitude, which we place distinctly above it. But—

"2. Even supposing we were to succeed in educing a whole body of truth from the mass of tradition we have before referred to,—what, I ask, would even in this case be the ground of certainty,—what the precise *reason* for which we should fully yield to it our firm assent? The ground of certitude would evidently lie in the *number of minds* which had yielded to this system their common assent; not in the mere fact of its being a tradition. It is the assent of these minds that makes the particular opinions we are supposing so veracious; it is the assent of these minds which distinguishes those opinions from all others as being absolutely universal and true; it is the assent of these minds, in a word, which gives them the very property of being regarded as of Divine authority. Accordingly, the ground of certitude, after all, even on the principle of catholicity, lies not in the tradition *as tradition*, but in *the spirit of humanity*, which alone decides upon its genuine character, and separates the true from the false. Here, then, the very principle of tradition virtually breaks down; the ground of belief, instead of being purely objective, becomes really subjective; instead of lying beyond humanity, it is actually vested in the very consciousness and soul of humanity. Tradition may give the material of truth (and all the *matter* of our knowledge, we admit, must be presented to us from without,) but it is the consent of the universal human mind alone; it is the sympathy which it has with the truth itself; it is the affinity it feels for what is valid, in opposition to what is hollow and false; *it is this*, and this alone, which gives us (in the case before us) the ultimate appeal, and furnishes our firmest basis of certitude. It is little imagined by those who are holding up the principle 'quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,' as the basis of all religious belief, that this

very principle, instead of maintaining the validity of tradition as a final source of human certitude, is, virtually speaking, a direct appeal to the authority of the human reason, and derives from this very authority, which they essay to despise, all its point and all its power."*

There is yet one resource left to which the principle of tradition may betake itself. Dislodged from its lower and more partial positions, it has from time to time assumed a more universal form, and attempted to assert for itself a philosophical foundation. To accomplish this end, it is affirmed that a primitive revelation was granted to man at his first creation; that this revelation was embodied in the Divine gift of language; and that all truth which exists in the world has come down in regular succession from these primary and divinely imparted elements. The theory of tradition when put into this shape evidently brings us to this fundamental question—Whether was the most primitive evidence of spiritual truth to man a subjective or an objective manifestation? Whether must our final appeal for certitude in these matters be to the *inward* experience of humanity, as regards the direct intuitions granted to the religious consciousness; or must that appeal be to an outward gift of facts and ideas proffered through a mechanical and verbal impartation, which has come down by tradition from age to age along the stream of time? Upon this latter hypothesis we make the following remarks:—

1. Admitting that, at his creation, man was furnished with a primitive and verbal revelation, yet the value of it must have been long destroyed by the channel through which it has flowed. Experience shows us that we can never depend upon the accurate transmission of ideas orally from one age to another; that they are sure to become

* See Lectures on the Philosophical Tendencies of the Age, Lecture III.

colored by the subjective channels through which they pass; and that the greater the number of minds which receive them, the *less* probable it is that we shall have a correct statement of the case in the end. Surely it cannot be a very satisfactory hypothesis to suppose, that, amidst all the confusion of thought and opinion which has ever characterized the immature ages of human history, the whole sum of truth, to which we can trust, is to be found amidst the scattered fragments of a primitive tradition, the very existence of which is itself hypothetical.

2. If we admitted that such a traditionary element really does exist; yet it is undeniable that it must be mixed up with a vast deal of error and absurdity. Now what we here affirm is this: that any imaginable test, by which the true can be separated from the false, implies a subjective principle of certitude within the human reason itself. If we are to decide upon what is valid *for ourselves*, then the final test is to be found in the individual reason; if it is to be decided by common consent, then the final test is the universal reason, or common sense of mankind.

3. The very existence of a primary revelation implies something *more* than an objective impartation of truth; for what effect could *words* produce upon any mind, supposing that mind to exist in a state of blank unsusceptibility? When truth is conveyed in words, it presupposes some internal preparation, some subjective power or susceptibility; something *in the man* that can seize upon the word, and appropriate its meaning. Accordingly, we are forced to come to this admission, that to a mind in such a state as we have described, no verbal revelation could possibly have been made; the words would have fallen dead upon the ear; truth never could have taken its abode in a soul, where there was no soil to receive it, no previous *light* by which it could be beheld. To make the hypothesis, therefore, of a primitive

revelation at all feasible, it would be necessary to frame it upon a model quite different from this mechanical idea. We must suppose that, if the Creator would communicate truth to his creatures, he gave them minds originally capable of feeling it, and originally capable of sympathizing with it. In one word, the first revelation of God to man must have been an *inward* revelation. Here, accordingly, the principle of tradition, if logically and consistently carried out, again breaks down in its very last resource, and in the moment of its supposed triumph. It says, all our real knowledge is divine; it comes from God; it is received by direct communication from his hands. Truly so, we reply: our knowledge *is* divine; but it is so just because humanity itself is divine; it comes from God, because we came forth from God; it flows to us from Heaven, because man ever received all his inspiration, all his mental life, all his inward experience of spiritual realities direct form Heaven. Here, therefore, the mechanical principle necessarily gives way to the dynamical; the truth that knowledge is divine remains; but it remains *not* to bear witness to the delusiveness of the human faculties, as though they could never have perceived truth had it not been imparted to them *objectively*, but rather to show that our spiritual knowledge is divine just for this reason, that man who realizes it is himself a child of the divinity, and is permitted to gaze upon that world from which he derived his source. Thus, then, the theory of tradition, when consistently carried out, and followed up through all its progressive phases, merges at length into the great idea of *intuition*, as we have already presented it.*

IV. We come now to consider the theory of religious certitude, which is based upon the *letter* of the Bible.

This theory has been reviewed by implication in some

* See Lectures on the Philosophical Tendencies of the Age, p. 136.

of our previous remarks, as in those upon revelation, upon theology, and upon tradition; all we require to do, therefore, in the present case, is to compress the argument into a short compass, and give the general conclusion. The Bible, as we now have it, consists of a collection of writings, composed at different periods, by men of exceedingly different mind and character, containing history, politics, precept, devotion, doctrine, and prophecy. No one can pretend that these writings give us a connected system of truth *scientifically* developed; but every one, we apprehend, must grant the extraordinary nature of the moral and spiritual *ideas* which it every where unfolds. These writings, then, are placed before us, resting upon the most unquestionable historical evidence, and bearing all the marks they well *can* bear of being just what they profess to be—namely, a manifestation of the mind and will of God, as made known to the consciousness of the writers. All this we *take for granted* in the outset, and shall proceed to construct our argument on the supposition that the whole is fully admitted by the reader.

This book, then, consisting of these varied materials, being put into our hands, the sentiments conveyed will require, of course, to be properly understood, in order that it may become *to us* either a source of truth, or a basis of certitude. The main question, therefore, for us to consider is this: *What is necessary to the due comprehension of the Bible, so that it may be in any sense an authoritative intellectual appeal?* Place it before a mere animal, and it conveys *nothing* whatever to his understanding; place it before an intelligent *man*, and he immediately receives *some* of the ideas which it was intended to convey. A human understanding, therefore, is necessary at once to grasp and interpret the written word, before it can become in any manner, or to any degree, a basis of religious certitude.

The term understanding, however, thus popularly used,

is extremely indefinite. Admitting that reason, or understanding, is necessary to interpret the word, we have to inquire, *how much* reason, or how much understanding, is necessary in order to give us *a right* to view the Bible as a fixed basis of certitude? A thoroughly ignorant man, teeming with prejudice, and having his views confined within some narrow traditionary channel, cannot surely be said to derive any great degree of theological certainty from his perusal of the Scriptures, since he interprets every thing according to his own notions. Let us, then, go a step further. Let us suppose that the truth-seeker is not beset with all these prejudices; that he is honest and intelligent in his research; that his heart and mind are alike cultivated; what, we ask, will be, in this case, the result? No doubt such an inquirer would feel himself at once enlightened and strengthened by the study of the Scriptures; but does he find it an easy matter to construct *a complete system of religious knowledge* out of the data presented to him: nay, does he find it easy to come to any thing like a final and conclusive certitude upon the exact import of the separate and individual doctrines, which the formation of such a system involves? Even when he has done his best, there is the consciousness left behind, that as good men in former times have ever brought their own peculiar views and conceptions to the task of interpretation, and have thus been led into very opposite conclusions; so *he*, also, must himself have brought his own habits and tendencies of mind, his own national feelings, his own educational bias to the work of interpretation, and thus arrived at a result which must really have been produced by a great variety of internal, as well as external influences.

We are driven, therefore, in our search after certitude, as arising from the letter of the word, to professed critics and theologians, who are supposed to have got *beyond* the reach of any partial bias, and to proceed upon purely scientific

principles of interpretation. What course, then, have *they* to pursue, in order to reach the proposed end? First of all, they must settle the text and the canon of Scripture with perfect accuracy, and on the most unquestionable evidence; next, they must determine *in what sense* the Scriptures, when the canon is decided on, are inspired, since this point will make an essential difference in the whole mode of procedure employed to elicit the truth; thirdly, they must determine what are the true principles of biblical interpretation—how far it is literal, how far allegorical, how far analogical, how far the sentiments conveyed are mingled up with the philosophical and religious ideas of the times, how far the phraseology is that of the Hebrew worship and literature. And even when this is accomplished, still but small progress is yet made in coming to fixed results; for the truth conveyed implicitly through the history, devotion, prophecy, precept, and epistle of the Bible, has to be brought into a systematic whole; and to do this, some logical organum is absolutely necessary, whether the Aristotelian, whether the Baconian, or whether some yet different method of philosophical analysis.

In brief, let it only be considered that the method and principles, both of criticism and interpretation, are necessarily thrown upon the human reason, and *on the hypothesis now before us*, that reason becomes unavoidably the ultimate test for distinguishing the true from the false. For what is it that guides us in the determination of the method we employ, but the nature of the results? Apply a method of interpretation to the Scriptures, which evolves conclusions contradictory to our reason, or repulsive to our moral nature, and we at once reject it. Apply another method, which draws forth results perfectly consonant with our highest ideas of truth or duty, and we accept that method as the right one; so that, admitting the Scriptures to bring to us ideas and sentiments on divine and spiritual things, yet if we proceed

upon the hypothesis, that the mode of obtaining certitude is by interpreting the *letter* by the aid of the individual reason, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion, that the test of truth lies in that principle of intelligence which decides upon the mode of interpretation, *i.e.*, in the *reason* itself.

We find, therefore, as a matter of logical necessity, that the theory of religious certitude which throws the whole decision upon the interpretation of the letter of Scripture, insensibly merges into the very foundation-principle of Rationalism; for in one case, as in the other, the individual reason is the final appeal. And this result, be it observed, perfectly coincides with the facts of history; for nearly all the Rationalism of modern times has based itself upon biblical interpretation, and appeals even to the Scriptures themselves as a verification of its conclusions. "Is, then, the Bible so indefinite," it might be said, "that we cannot arrive at any *certitude* as to what it really contains? Surely it is all very simple, and he who runs may read." But, alas! so says the very next theorist we meet with; and so says a third; and so they say each and all. The term simplicity, as applied to truth, is very indefinite and very deceptive. Every man's system imbibed in infancy and moulded to all his habits of thought, seems *to him* the plenitude of simplicity; it is only when we have broken the spell of such habits and associations, that we begin to see what an abyss there is in ideas which we looked upon as the most elementary truths; only then that we begin to find out, that some human *system* has really moulded the Bible to our understandings, far more than the Bible has ever served as data for us to construct our system. As a moral agency, indeed, nothing can be more definite, nothing more simple than the Bible; and nothing will lead the sincere student by a shorter course to a satisfactory result; but viewed as a basis of *scientific* truth, the case is very far otherwise.

Little do they consider who proclaim so loudly the doctrine of private judgment or private interpretation *as an intellectual principle*, what lies concealed in it *now*, and what may come forth from it hereafter. Once give the individual principle full play, and whatever be the result of a man's speculations on the Bible, you have not a word wherewith to resist him. *His* individual judgment is theoretically as good as your own, and if he be a keener logician than yourself, a thousand to one but he will beat you utterly out of the field, and set up his logical Rationalism completely over the head of your logical orthodoxy.

The conclusion, therefore, to which we come is this,—that the letter of the Bible cannot be the basis of religious certitude; and that even if we did arrive at certitude through its mere verbal *interpretation*, the actual test would still be the *reason* of the interpreter.

If religious certitude, then, is to be derived from the Scriptures at all, it cannot be derived from them in the way of verbal criticism. All criticism is *negative;* it brings no real perceptions of truth, hitherto unexperienced, to the mind; it does not raise our spiritual faculties up to the proper intensity for seeing truth in its reality and its unity. The reason why so many and varied results flow from the criticism of this very same book is, simply because that book treats of matters which, to the speculative reason merely, are quite inaccessible; because it takes us into a region of thought that can only be appreciated by the spiritual eye—by the power of *intuition*. Accordingly, in proportion as the whole intensity of the religious nature in man is developed, and the power of spiritual perception increased, in that proportion will the words of Scripture assume a more pregnant signification, the data on which logical criticism bases itself become varied, and the whole result vary in the same degree.

The *absolute condition* for attaining scientific certitude in connection with Christian truth, lies in the possibility of our possessing clear and decisive intuitions of such spiritual realities as are presented by the Christian revelation, of stating them in distinct terms, and applying to them the criteria we have before referred to. To attain such intuitions by verbal criticism, or mere grammatical interpretation, is evidently impossible; the results of these, and all other mere logical principles, when applied to the construction of a theology, are always divergent, leading to *differences* far more than promoting unity: on the other hand, the results of the moral influences exerted by the Scriptures on the human *heart* are always convergent; they tend to bring all men into the same spiritual state, and thus to give them similar conceptions or intuitions of Divine things. The only way, accordingly, in which the Scriptures become a ground of religious certitude is, by awakening the religious consciousness of humanity; by presenting scenes and ideas which lead the minds of men, thus awakened, to the clear recognition of spiritual realities; and by giving us such examples of moral perfection that the eye of the soul, instead of ranging over the universe in search of its highest longings, finds them fully satisfied and perfectly realized in the life and person of Christ, and the effects he wrought in the first disciples. In this point of view, however, we see at once that the Scriptures themselves are a moral agency, not a scientific appeal; the basis of certitude lies in the *essential characteristics* of the intuitions themselves—in their distinctness, in their uniformity, and, under due influences, in their universality; not in their symbolical representation upon the sacred page.

This view of the matter, instead of detracting aught from the idea of revelation, is far more consonant with human experience, and more consistent with the scientific principles of

human knowledge; and gives even a higher value to the worth and power of the Holy Scriptures than is done by any of the mere mechanical theories of inspiration. With regard to experience, we daily see that men *do not* obtain uniformity or certitude by verbal criticism; while they do obtain at once conviction and unity by the moral power of the Word. With regard to the principles of human knowledge, we have seen that all revelation is made to the interior being of man; and that the Scriptures, therefore, cannot be an actual revelation to any one until they have awakened within him the power of spiritual discernment. And lastly, with regard to the dignity with which the Word of God is to be invested;—surely it is assigning the very highest place at once to its value and its power, to ascribe to it a perpetual moral influence over the human heart; to estimate it as the great means of awakening the soul of man to the spiritual world which lies around us on every side; to show how it can educate our minds to the clear intuition of the Divine realities there presented; and finally, to recognize in it a perpetual *canon*, with which our own fluctuating religious life can ever be compared, by which our low attainments are ever chided, and from whose hallowed incentives we may ever derive new inspiration and new motives to faith, to resignation, and to active duty. In fine, profess what we may as a matter of theory, yet we *never do* obtain a fixed and confiding certitude in regard to any religious truth, until it has entered the heart as a spiritual principle; until it has verified its proper validity by producing a similar influence upon others; and until we can apply to it the *very same criteria* by which we acknowledge the certitude of any truth *whatever* within the whole range of human knowledge.

V. This brings us, then, last of all, to give a brief explanation of what we consider to be the true principles of certitude as regards religious truth.

And before we pronounce a distinct answer to this question, we must make one or two preliminary observations. First of all, then, care must be taken not to confound mere logical order and consecutiveness with *material* certitude. There may be logical certitude, as we before showed, where there are no ideas *whatever* involved in the terms employed, and equally so where the ideas are *absolutely false*. The logic of a system refers simply to its consecutive development, and the dependence of one part upon another; it does not take any direct cognizance of the validity of the conceptions themselves, from which the whole train of thinking is originated. This is indeed a matter almost self-evident, and might well have been passed over unnoticed, were it not unfortunately the case that there are many who look for nothing else in a theological system but logical accuracy as to its development. The definitions and axioms with which they start have come by habit to be regarded by them as so indubitable and self-evident that they cannot imagine even the very possibility of any error existing *there*. Accordingly, the regular formal and logically-consistent development of these fundamental ideas into a connected body of Christian doctrine appears to them to be a process which cannot fail to be valid; a process, moreover, on which the private reason is perfectly competent to decide. Hence arises the trust which such minds naturally repose in the individual principle, little thinking, perhaps, that in so doing they are maintaining all that is essential to the defence of the most complete Rationalism. As far as the formal consistency, indeed, of any body of divinity is concerned, the individual reason and the laws of logic *may* be rightly employed as a final appeal; but we must not forget that all our logical reasonings, so far as they touch at all the essence or matter of the truth, have to be grounded in immediate *conceptions;* and the great question now before us is this,—How are *these conceptions* to be verified? or,—what

principle of certitude have we by which to test their fulness and their validity?

This leads us to another preliminary remark, namely, that, in seeking a test for the accuracy of our fundamental religious conceptions, we must not look for any principle of certitude like the laws of logical reasoning, which will decide our difficulties categorically, and pronounce a direct verdict that this conception is right and that conception is wrong. Such a decision would *presuppose* that we had already arrived at the full development of the idea, whereas it generally turns out that long disputes upon fundamental questions are mere delusions arising from imperfect vision. The paradox they appear to involve, and the struggle to which they give rise, generally originate in the fact, that the question is regarded by both parties from a low and altogether incompetent point of view. To decide categorically between them, therefore, would be certain to give a wrong decision after all, and the only thing which a valid criterion could do is to point the combatants to some higher principle, in which their doubts and differences may alike disappear. What we require in a criterion is some great directory, by which we may get the clearest view of fundamental principles that the present state of human development can afford; some appeal which will tell us clearly in what we are wrong, and point out to us the *direction* in which we may ever be approaching nearer to the *right;* some method, in a word, by which we can ascend intellectually to the full elevation of the age in which we live. This is the only criterion which is at all *adapted* to human nature; the only one which could be of any service to us; the only one which would bring us from the darkness of spiritual ignorance, more and more into the clearest sunlight of truth.

The certitude we look for in religious questions, as in all other cases of reflective truth, is intuitional and logical com-

bined. Logical certitude *only* would merely relate to the *form* of our theological system; intuitional certitude *only* could bring, perchance, the highest conviction to an individual mind if raised to a highly developed state of spiritual perception, but could not afford scientific or reflective conviction to others. What we require is a religious certitude, which will bear the proper criteria of validity to mankind at large, in the same sense as any other branch of moral truth will bear them.

The real principles of religious certitude can be deduced without much difficulty from the very nature of intuition. Intuition, as we have before explained, implies a direct gazing upon truth in its concrete unity. Were the power of doing so perfect, such as we may suppose to be the case with angelic minds, no further certitude would be required; for the objective reality thus perfectly depicted would be its own evidence, as it is with us in the case of our sense-perceptions. The power of spiritual vision, however, in man is dim and inconstant; the spiritual object, if perceived at all, is apt to be distorted by the incompetency of our inward eye; and consequently we grasp at every method open to us, by which the error may be compensated or corrected. All logical analysis and the reflective reconstruction of our knowledge originate in this desire to verify and complete our intuitions; but such methods are manifestly insufficient. Logical reasoning may have a great negative value in this respect; it may detect error, and may exhibit the interior consistency of our ideas of truth with the fixed laws of thought, where such consistency really exists; but it cannot directly extend our experience or carry us into the higher regions of *spiritual idea*. In all logical processes we are only engaged with conceptions already realized,—with intuitions already acquired and expressed; but it is abundantly evident that these very conceptions and these very intu-

itions may be in *themselves* extremely inadequate; that there may be whole regions of spiritual truth which range beyond our present ken; and that we need, therefore, some other method besides that of logical analysis, for coming to a clear understanding upon these points.

Now the most natural procedure we can follow, one, too, into which we almost instinctively fall, is to appeal to other minds circumstanced in the same manner, or perhaps still more favorably than ourselves. When our intuitions of spiritual things (those I mean which we have gained in connection with our whole Christian education and our knowledge of the Scriptures) prove to be ideas very partially experienced,—when they do not excite any strong sympathy in other minds,—when they fail to establish their claims by the readiness with which they are grasped, approved, and appropriated by men earnest for the truth, and placed under the proper conditions for becoming awakened to its reality, there is good reason for us to believe that they are intuitions of a very dim and imperfect character. On the contrary, in proportion as different minds placed under different circumstances bear a concurring testimony to the distinct realization of any great conception, and fully agree in the mode of its expression—in that proportion we feel the chance of distortion and imperfection in our own vision to be diminished, and a basis of certitude to be laid in the very fact of such a universal consent.

We are thus brought, in fact, to the very same great criteria which we laid down as applicable generally to the verification of human knowledge in its fundamental principles; for we require in Christian conceptions, as well as all other, that they should possess clearness, uniformity, and, in a certain sense, universality, to substantiate their full claim to be regarded as *sure* and *certain*. Clearness they *must* possess, or we have no idea of what the conceptions themselves

would indicate, and are in the position of those persons above referred to, who, from the incompetency of their whole point of view, require to be absolutely *enlightened*, rather than simply *directed*. Uniformity there must be, or we are tossed about from one side of the question to another, uncertain where to rest as in the right centre. And universality there must also be in a certain sense of that word. To require, indeed, absolute universality, as a test of certitude, is manifestly absurd. To demand that every human being should possess a given intuition, and agree in the outward expression of it ere it can be regarded as duly certified, would be to demand an impossibility. Humanity was formed for development and progress; and all we can justly demand, under the idea of universality, is that the conception we would verify, be clearly shown to be one *towards* which humanity in its development *necessarily tends*, and which is universally testified to by minds sufficiently elevated in their whole moral being to realize it. Such is the real principle of Catholicity, as applied to the verification of Christian truth. *Christian* ideas have incontestably proved themselves to pertain to the highest form of man's religious consciousness. Humanity itself has paid homage to them by relinquishing all other forms of worship, just as it has advanced in intelligence and civilization; and amongst all the conceptions which have sprung up in the Christian world, *those* bear the undoubted marks of certitude, which live on through every era, which, instead of appearing for a little and then dying away, develope themselves in one steady course through the march of the ages, and which always, by their depth, intensity, and inherent splendor, cast their shadows before them, and point out the religious course of the future. Thus, when we see the *world* tending in its spiritual development to Christianity; when, further, we see the dim and imperfect conceptions, which have attached

themselves to Christianity, dropping away, or becoming penetrated with moral idea; and when, lastly, we can single out certain great principles of truth, which appear to be the *foci* of Christian light, which have unfolded themselves to a brighter realization from age to age, and towards which the whole Christian world is still gazing, as the great points around which their spiritual life revolves; these, assuredly, are the very principles which bear upon them the marks of *true universality*, because they are *those to which humanity entire incessantly tends*.

Let us then, in conclusion, show the application of this doctrine of religious certitude to the resolution of disputed questions within the range of Christianity itself. It will be generally admitted, that the person, teaching, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, viewed as one great and divine manifestation, were the means of introducing what we may term the *peculiar Christian element* into the religious consciousness of mankind. The Christian ideas and affections thus produced, spread themselves from mind to mind, and from heart to heart, and were represented to the world, after the first disciples had passed away, by the writings they left behind them. Out of these writings, the most important and indubitably authentic were selected by the Church as being the clearest manifestation of apostolical Christianity in its spirit and doctrine; for rightly did the Christians of the second century *consider*, that the utterances of those who lived so near to Christ, and who had such vivid intuitions granted to them of divine realities, possessed, and ever must possess, to the Church, a canonical authority, breathing as they did a spirit, after which we have ever to aspire. This Christian element, thus infused into the living consciousness of the Church, and explained according to the individuality of the sacred writers, was not so much a complete and scientific system of truth, as a new germ of spiritual *life*,

which was to strike its roots deep into the soil of human nature, and become more and more a practical reality, unfolding itself in the world. Each individual man, by the teaching of the Church, and by the study of the word, was to have his entire religious consciousness impregnated and irradiated with Christian truth; and thus the whole Christian system was to develope its moral energies in the course of human history, until the final glory of the Church should arrive, and the restoration of man be complete.

We will suppose, now, that this process of religious development has gone on for a hundred years. In the meantime oppositions have been raised, controversies have sprung up, heresies have made their appearance; and now the inquiring spirit of some earnest thinker, or of some pious community, perplexed by these controversies and disputes, demands to know what may be really relied upon as being veritably Christian truth. The canon of Scripture, it is true, may be complete, and it may be in their hands; but this does not relieve the difficulty. Scripture must be *interpreted;* and on the principles of interpretation there is a vast diversity of opinion, giving rise to an equal, or even a greater diversity in the results; for each man and each party views the letter of the word through the medium of their own religious conceptions, and finds in it a greater or a less intensity of meaning according to the development of their intuitional consciousness.

What appeal, then, can there be for the validity of these intuitions,—what principle of certitude applicable to the nature and tendencies of that whole Christian life out of which the main conceptions of Christian doctrine are evolved? The history and spontaneous practice of the early Church give us a reply. The appeal was always made to the Catholic feeling and thinking of the whole Christian community. And rightly so. We do not mean to say, that the

Catholic consciousness of the Christian Church, either as it was then or as it is now, could give us a result absolutely true and perfect; but we mean to affirm, that the best mode of correcting the indistinctness or the distortions of our own religious conceptions is, to compare them with the religious experience of the greatest number of earnest minds to which we can have access; that we may thus find in what we most deviate from the *general law* of man's religious development.

The individual reason adopting certain definitions as indubitable, is ever in danger of being hurried away, by the flow of its logical ardor, into false conclusions, and sometimes even into the wildest extremes; while the very eagerness of party strife naturally leads us to lose sight of the entire side of a question, and to rush forward to the most partial results. But amidst all these minor perturbations, and partly by their very means, the Catholic consciousness of the universal Church has gone forward in its development; one point after another has been cleared up, one principle after another brought to light; and the calm, unbiassed, heaven-aspiring mind, standing aloof from the din and passion of controversy, sees the central course through which God is guiding his ark, and falls back upon the great Catholic hopes, convictions, and aspirations of the Christian mind in its upward progress, as its safest guide, its surest resource.

All this, be it observed, is in perfect consistency with the philosophical principles we have already deduced. The religious intuitions of the human mind, in accordance with their very nature, grow up to an ever-increasing perfection in humanity at large, when it is brought under the influence of Christian ideas and principles; the theology of every age is the formal statement of the truth which these intuitions involve or convey; and consequently, the highest appeal for

the truth of our theological sentiments must be the Catholic expression of the religious consciousness of purified humanity in its eternal progress heavenward. This, we say, must inevitably be our highest appeal next to God himself. Every partial system contains a greater or less amount of mere human *individuality;* it is that element which runs through all systems alike, which all are seeking to realize, all striving more fully to express, which we must look upon as the Divine teaching of Christ himself, drawn forth from Holy Scripture by the perpetual operation of Povidence in human history, and the perpetual outpouring of his Spirit upon the Church.

One word, in fine, respecting the relation which the principle of certitude, now expounded, bears to those above referred to. Place this principle by the side of that which rests upon the individual reason, and it gives us at once an objective centre around which our individual speculations may securely revolve. It is *an anchor* to the soul, which, while it allows the individual to toss about at pleasure upon the surface of mere logical argumentation, yet permits him not to drift away from the proper track, or suffer shipwreck of his faith in all that is eternal and Divine. Place, again, the same principle by the side of *tradition*, and it exhibits an equal power to curb its errors and extract its real advantages. The principle of tradition looks upon the truth as something already *perfect and fixed*, and then gropes its way backwards amongst the gloom and uncertainty of past ages in order to find it. Alas! what can result from such a process but an interminable uncertainty as to what we are to select and what to refuse? And even if we did succeed in grasping just that which we searched for, what would it be but the dead and withered skeleton of a truth, which once, indeed, possessed vitality, but which now, drawn forth from the sepulchres of the past, has no life in the present con-

sciousness of humanity,—no power either to subdue the world, or to complete the organism of the Church to the full and perfect stature of Christ. We look to the past, not as an *authority*, but as an aid to interpret the present. Convinced that truth *to man* is progressive, we gaze with intense interest upon the course it has already run, and delight to trace its bright and glorious pathway down to its present stage of development. But why do we do this? Not because the *realized truth* of any past age will satisfy the present, but because we can the better understand, by the light of history, what is the most advanced thinking of this our age, and what is the true elevation to which our religious consciousness has now arrived. We trust *not* to the Catholic thinking of the past; we trust rather to that of the present, which contains in its embrace the fruits of the past together with the seeds of the future. Assuredly, if there be a rhythmic development of ideas in the world, it were worse than vain to read the course of history backwards, and be always looking to the vestments of worn-out ideas, instead of interpreting the living voice of God as it speaks to us in the phenomena of the present hour. Against the sickly sentimentalism that sees nothing but glory in antiquity, nothing but vulgarity in the present age, we earnestly protest, as being inhuman in its nature, a libel against Providence, and faithless to the real spirit and power of Christian truth.

We honor the wisdom of the early ages which summoned those memorable œcumenical Councils, whose deliberations even now have a certain weight and authority resting upon them; but we should have still greater confidence in an œcumenical Council of the present day, were it only formed upon the same principles of a true spiritual Catholicism. Could we but once again see the selfishness, the pride, the low and little-mindedness of party spirit laid aside,—could we but once again see a body of *real men*, earnest, truth-

loving, self-sacrificing minds from every quarter of the universal Church, meeting in solemn conclave to hold forth to each other the real life of Christian faith, and in the comparison of their inward experiences and renunciations of their poor artificial pretensions, seeking to grasp the central prinples in which their hearts can alike blend, we should behold a practical application of the great test we have asserted, which would do more to fix the faith of the doubting, and heal the wounds of the Church, than all the logical contests of the past have done to shake our belief in Christianity, and sever our affections from each other.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SIGNIFICANCY OF THE PAST.

THOUGH far from agreeing generally with the Hegelian philosophy, either in its spirit or its results, yet I have long felt that the dialectic method, as propounded and employed in that system, contains some few precious germs of abiding truth. On this supposition alone, can its unprecedented influence over thousands of deep and earnest minds be accounted for. That there is a law of progress, indeed, by which ideas and intuitions develope themselves in the human mind, forming a kind of real and primeval logic, is a theory which is not only in itself probable, but one which may be carefully verified by actual experience.

We have already seen that intuitions, unlike the fixed laws of thought, grow up from a very incomplete to an increasingly intense and perfected form, both in the individual and in the common consciousness of humanity. The actual history of any of our great moral conceptions will show us this fact in a very decided manner, whether we regard that history as it has existed in our own minds, or in the common reason of mankind. Moreover, a somewhat closer attention to the subject proves to us that these and all similar conceptions are evolved into higher and more pregnant forms by the united process of analysis and synthesis. An idea, we

suppose for the sake of example, is now presented to our contemplation;—what course, then, should we *instinctively* take, in order fully to comprehend and unfold it? The first thing we do is to *analyze* it into its component parts, so as to place those parts before us in every possible point of view. Every fundamental conception, we possess, may be presented in at least *two* distinct aspects. Thus, the notions of matter and spirit have their realistic, and their idealistic poles; the notion of beauty hovers between the actual and the ideal; and the notion of God has ever tended, either on the one hand to the form of a human personality, or, on the other hand, to that of the absolute essence of all things, as maintained in the various systems of pantheism. In every case there are opposite *poles*, towards which our intuitions tend, giving rise (as Kant showed) to antinomies, or contradictions, when we attempt to reason logically upon them, and yet affording us a deeper insight into the real inward intensity of the idea itself. Most persons imagine, that, when contests arise from seeing things in these opposite points of view, it is necessary to fight out the battle by all the armory of logic, until one party is beaten, the other victorious. But such is not the order of nature, and such is but seldom the result in the actual history of the human mind. These opposites, as the whole subject is better understood, are seen not to be altogether unreconcilable; in proportion as they emerge more and more into the full light of truth, their course becomes increasingly convergent, until they meet together in some higher unity, and lose their antagonism in some broader principle. After a time, however, this higher principle is *itself* subjected to analysis, when another opposition appears, and another antagonism ensues, which is in its turn destined to go on until it also disappears in a unity still higher and broader than the last. Thus our great intuitions roll onwards in their course, thus our ideas evolve themselves; and the life or

rhythm of their being is that which has become moulded in the hands of Hegel into a philosophical, or, as he himself terms it, a *dialectical* METHOD.

If such a rhythmic process be observable in the development of all moral and philosophical ideas in human history; if we find, moreover, that different schools, maintaining the opposite poles of any great idea, form the very *pulsation* of its onward movement, then we may expect to find the same phenomenon presented, in reference to the *historical life* of Christianity. It is no valid objection against this to say that Christianity, being of Divine origin, and coming to us as a direct revelation, ought to be excepted from the law of mere human ideas. The fact is, that *all* primeval truth, of whatever kind, all the elementary ideas we receive through the intuitional consciousness, are primarily of divine origin, and all come to us by a direct revelation. Whatever ideas are to become a part of the inward subjective life of humanity, (it matters little respecting their origin, or their mode of communication,) all must alike conform to the necessary laws of human nature, and human progress. Christian ideas, like all others, must live in the soul of man; they must form a portion of his real consciousness; they must develope their power and their resources by time and labor. If such, accordingly, be the case, they must follow the same law of progress which we see to hold good in other cases; and the past history of Christianity must have a *significancy* about it, which we can only fully appreciate by means of the *law*, under the guidance of which it has unceasingly unfolded itself in the world.

In order to comprehend somewhat of the process we are now considering, with reference to Christianity, let us carry back our minds to the apostolic age, and fix our attention upon the period immediately succeeding the resurrection of Christ. What may we imagine Christianity to have been in

the minds who embraced it on the Day of Pentecost? What was it as a *system* of truth, of doctrine, of duty? No one, we should think, could for a moment suppose that, as a formal body of truth and doctrine, Christianity was *then*, subjectively speaking, in any way so complete as it is *now*; or that it had brought indeed any considerable portion of religious *idea*, consciously and reflectively, home to the human mind. Christianity was then a mighty spontaneous impulse. Through the person, the life, the discourse of Christ, it had wakened up in the minds of the devout great and living conceptions of God, of man, of truth, of duty, of sin, of holiness, and of immortality to come, which rushed in one united mass of moral power upon their affections and their will. Christianity, indeed, was then as veritably a *system* as now; but it was a system undeveloped,—a unity as yet unanalyzed,—a religion never yet invested by the understanding with the forms of theology.

That Christianity should *continue* in this its primitive form was a moral impossibility. While the period of *wonder* lasted—while the soul, overwhelmed with the new and celestial light which burst in upon it, was elevated continually to the high tension of adoration and love, there could be little room for calm contemplation, much less for logical analysis. But once let this wonder subside; once let the supernatural light, which was shed around the cradle of the faith, fade away; once let the understanding gain its natural ascendency in the economy of the man, and it became inevitable that the primary moral unity, in which the Christian ideas were at once enfolded and conveyed, should be subjected to analysis, to separation, and at length to a formal and logical exposition. This process began in the lifetime of the Apostles, and even through their own instrumentality. Each of those inspired minds, although they received the truth by direct intuitions granted from above, yet grasped it,

and taught it, through the medium of their own individuality. Christianity, though in itself a perfect unity, yet was regarded even by them from different points of view. The mind of Paul, for example, was strictly of the severe and logical order; it ever tended to definitions—to distinctive statements—to logical argumentation; and, although we should hardly say that in his Epistles Christianity as yet assumes the complete aspect of a formal and systematic theology, yet the path was at least opened to it, and that peculiar method of thinking exhibited, from which such a theology was sure, sooner or later, to result. The writings of John are of a totally different cast. There we see the *intuitional* element preponderating over the logical—the religious life brought into more direct prominence than theological lore. In James, again, we see purely the practical side of Christianity. The first says, "*Believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The second says, "He that *loveth* is born of God." The third affirms, that "pure and undefiled religion before God, even the Father, is to visit the fatherless and widow in their afflictions, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world."

Whilst, however, we find differences as to the mode in which Christianity was grasped by its first teachers, yet still they were all so deeply imbued with the same spirit, that such differences hardly disturbed in any degree the religious unity of the Apostolic Church. We gain our idea of Christianity, as it then existed, from all these apostolic writings combined; and thus by the action of our own minds upon the sentiments there contained, we *construct* a unitary conception of the whole religious life, which then flowed through the consciousness of the faithful. In fact, the first great pulsation of that inevitable process, by which Christianity was to be developed in the world, had taken place; the first historic period of that long succeeding series had rolled

round; the first effort at separation and analysis had been made; and the first attempt at gaining a conscious and reflective idea of the Doctrine of Christ had been successfully put forth.

In order to follow up this historical process, we must pass onwards from the apostolic period, to about the middle or even close of the second century. A very different scene now opens upon our view. The comparative unity, which reigned during that former period, is now no more: schisms, heresies, strifes, and contentions have begun to manifest themselves in very decided forms: the variations which were visible in so gentle and natural a form, in the different points of view from which Christianity was regarded by the Apostles themselves, are now exaggerated into sects and parties, each claiming for itself the superiority over all the rest. The data upon which these parties proceeded were virtually the same. They all had the Old Testament, and the Jewish life to appeal to: they all had the apostolic writings, *more or less*, in their hands; they all had the living voice, and the now fresh and distinctive tradition of the Church. From what, then, did the differences arise? The sole answer we can give is, that they arose from the different exercise of *reason*, in the several cases, upon the data which lay open before it.

Here, then, for the first time, dawned the great problem upon the Church; namely, to reconcile and apportion the respective claims of *reason* and *authority* in the sphere of religious truth. Little did those early Christian philosophers know all the contention which lay concealed in this problem; little did they think how long it would take to work out any thing approaching to a full resolution of it; still less, did they imagine that it would be, for centuries upon centuries, the very impulse which should excite the whole Church to unwearied intellectual progress. Yet, such has been, and still

is, the case. These two ideas—*authority* and *reason*—have been the great *poles* of all religious inquiry, of all theological controversy. On the side of authority, we may enumerate all the attempts the world has witnessed to repress criticism —to govern the reason—to set up a central doctrine, reared upon some divine pedestal, which no human mind was supposed competent to analyze or to question—and to form in this way a Catholic Christian unity. On the side of reason, we have had a perpetual struggle to analyze—to test—and to realize in the natural consciousness the truth of revelation; and the inevitable results of this struggle have always been differences of opinion, antagonistic conclusions, variations of judgment, (according to the keenness and breadth of the individual reason which judges,) and a consequent tendency away from *unity*, to separation, division, and disagreement.

Here, accordingly, in the terms authority and reason, we have involved the two opposite poles of the dialectic process, by which the idea of Christianity has been perpetually *evolving* along the pathway of human history. Whenever the Church has rested *entirely* on authority, the result has been, first, a stagnation of religious vitality, and then a theology, which appears rather as an excrescence affixed to man's real life, than one which lives and works in the natural and daily play of the human consciousness. On the other hand, whenever the Church has thrown herself *entirely* upon the individual reason, the consequence has been a loosening of all the bands of spiritual unity; a religion of logic and bare propositions, rather than that of an awakened Christian consciousness; and a process of pulverization into sects and parties, which if unchecked would never stop short of an utter isolation of each individual from the soft and nurturing bosom of the Church Catholic, in its organic life and power.

In pointing out the persistency of the struggle to adjust the claims of reason and authority, and in referring to this as

the central point of the great controversies of Christianity in the centuries which are past, we are simply keeping within the precincts of *historical fact*. And, be it remembered, historical fact is not to be trifled with; nor is it our place to lament over it, as though just because it does not satisfy *our* ideas of what the course of religious truth ought to have been, that course is all a sad picture of time lost, and talents squandered. History is diviner than we are apt to think it; the wanderings of the human spirit after truth are not all delusion and loss; extremes, however terrible, have instruction in them, which could never otherwise be realized; and antagonisms of opinion have displayed or called forth a mental *tension*, with which the world could ill dispense. It has been the providential mission of one party, to maintain the validity of divine *authority* in religion; it has been the mission of another to advocate the claims of *reason*, and the light that is within us; it has ofttimes been the aim of a third, to reconcile the claims of the two, and bring the Christian world into harmony and peace. By few, comparatively, has it been seen, that we should purchase the ascendency either of authority or of reason at a dear rate; yea, that it were an unfruitful repose to consummate a perfect reconciliation of the two, before the fulness of the time has come; but that, in their very antagonism, we have the secret spring of real progress; and that in the continual separation effected by the *reason*, we are marching onwards to an ever higher, broader, and more catholic unity in the clear comprehension of all that is truly implied in *divine authority*.

With these principles to guide us, let us cast a rapid glance over the *past*, and attempt to read its significancy. When first the question of reason and authority dawned upon the Church in the second century, the problem appeared a very simple one to resolve. The apostles themselves were naturally regarded as the source of authority; the distinctive

notions and speculations of different Churches, or individuals, were set down to the side of mere fallible human *reason*. The point, therefore, now aimed at, was this—to select out of all the religious writings and teachings, which the Church reverenced and employed, just those which *undoubtedly* came from the pen or the lips of the Apostles, and to give these forth as the rule or canon by which private judgment should be henceforth exercised in religious matters. To this laudable attempt we owe the New Testament in its present form; for those writings were made the written canon, which the Church of that period decided upon as being distinctly and unquestionably of apostolic origin and authority.

The canon, therefore, being fixed upon by general consent, the problem, it was supposed, might be considered as solved, and the grounds of dispute for ever set at rest. A very short time, however, was required to elapse ere it became abundantly evident that the question was any thing but settled by the determination of the canon of Scripture, yea, that the same dispute between reason and authority was destined to revive under a new form, and with far deeper bearings than before. In proportion as the human reason began to exercise itself upon the ideas spontaneously involved in the religious life of the age, it became clearer and clearer that the Scriptures did not contain, nor were designed to set forth, any formal statement, or logical system of truth; that they comprehended the *elements* of thinking rather than the results; that, admitting the canon, therefore, to be fixed and certain, yet still we require the aid of *reason* to interpret it, to evolve it into a formal theology, to *create* a whole system of truth on the basis of its illumination.

The continuous disputes which took place between the different branches of the Gnostics and the orthodox, from the middle of the second century down to the Council of Nice, represent the strong antagonism which then existed between

the principle of reason and of authority. The Gnostics, as their name imports, not content with the bare reception of certain undeveloped religious doctrines on the plea of a direct revelation, wanted to transform their faith into *knowledge*. Philosophy, which they had studied from the lips or writings of Oriental, Grecian, or Hebrew sages, showed them by a light which could not be mistaken, that the ordinary belief of the Christian Churches, however pure, sublime, and elevated in its nature, still left all the great *speculative* questions respecting creation and destiny, in abeyance. Adapted more especially for moral influence, that belief had not intruded upon the domain of philosophic statements, nor had as yet dreamed of constructing a whole system of metaphysical doctrine. Without designing, therefore, to impugn the truth of Christianity, these Christian speculators sought to *expound* it, —to make it satisfactory to the understanding as a *philosophy*, as well as purifying to the conscience as a moral influence and a Divine *faith*. Hence their discussions on the nature of the Trinity; the person of Christ; the creation of the world; the essence of virtue, and the origin of evil; and hence also the different modes of interpretation by which they sought at once to reconcile the Scriptures to their philosophy, and philosophy to the Scriptures. Little as we can now sympathize in the reveries of Gnosticism, yet it is impossible to overlook the fact, that theological *science* owes its rise, its first development, and not a little of its phraseology as used in the present day, to this source. Some of the most learned and laborious fathers of the Church avowedly owed their conversion to Christianity to the superiority its advocates showed in dealing with philosophical questions; and the apologies which form so great a share of the early patristic literature, owe well nigh the whole of their interest to the philosophical discussions contained in them—discussions in which they either overthrow the heathen dogmas, or demonstrate the superior *reasonableness* of their own.

Against the mystic Rationalism of the Gnostics, the more orthodox party opposed the weight of scriptural and Catholic *authority*. Placed, however, upon their defence, that party were obliged, in *their* turn, to bend the whole energy of their reason upon the clear explication of the Christian doctrines ordinarily acknowledged by the age. Instead of leaving them in that undefined and indistinct form in which they had been held by the primitive Churches, they were now obliged to oppose logic to logic, philosophy to philosophy, definition to definition. Theology began to mould itself into a scientific form, and although the principle of authority firmly maintained its ground against those who would tear themselves altogether away from it, yet the dictates of authority itself were now expressed in a guarded and logical phraseology, which bespoke the keenness of the controversy through which they had passed, and the necessity of sheltering themselves from future aggressions of a like nature. The Nicene Council was the triumph of Catholic authority over the Gnostic Rationalism; but it was a triumph which could only be gained by adopting on the side of authority itself the theological formularies to which the whole philosophical discussion had given rise. We may call the profession of the Nicene Council, therefore, a point of unity or agreement to which the theology of the age attained; but yet it was a unity much more pregnant with reflective idea, and much more developed in the whole tone of its scientific thinking, than had been that of the primitive Church itself.

In denominating the Nicene period as a point of agreement, we do not mean that it put an end to the theological controversies of the age. We regard it simply as the virtual termination of the purely *Gnostic* heresies—not certainly of the questions which arose out of them. It is to be remarked, however, that from this period the whole tone of religious controversy became greatly altered. Christian ideas had

now gained a decided *triumph* over the tenets of the heathen philosophies; the bold affirmation of theosophic and other heathen doctrines, and the attempt to reconcile them with Christianity, gradually died away, and the claims of reason over the dictates of authority were circumscribed within a much smaller and more intelligible sphere. In fact, the affirmations of reason, and the decisions of authority, began now to approach far nearer to each other, just in proportion as reason became Christianized, and Christianity reduced to logical and systematic terms. Accordingly, the next great controversy—that between Pelagius and Augustine—was almost entirely separated from any direct community with the dogmas of oriental, or even of Grecian philosophy, aiming rather at the correct logical exposition and statement of the already established points of Christian theology.

Pelagius may be regarded as the representative of the philosophic, or critical spirit, as then employed in the domain of religious truth; Augustine, though making an unsparing use of Aristotelian aids in the discussions he undertook, yet represented the principle of *authority* as then accepted by the Church. It did not long remain doubtful to which side the preponderance would be given. The character of the age was one singularly deficient in all independence of mind. The philosophers of the age were no longer thinkers for themselves, but merely commentators upon the thoughts of others; the politicians were more apt at making digests of laws already propounded, than at originating any broader ideas upon the questions of jurisprudence and government; the religious writers were, in like manner, employed in expounding the meaning of their *authorities* far more than in any independent researches into the real moral signification of the Christian doctrines. The reign of authority thus became established against the more independent efforts of the critical spirit, which now bade a long farewell to the world,

and withdrew itself almost entirely from its more prominent place on the stage of human development.

Under these partial influences, the purer theology of the Church disappeared, amid the darkness and barbarism which overspread like a cloud the whole of the western empire; the most entire and servile dependence upon authority, alike in ecclesiastical, theological, and philosophical questions, ensued; and European thought only showed any symptoms of awaking anew when the last relics of the ancient civilization had died away, and the first symptoms of the world's new life appeared.

To see the continuation of the antagonism, therefore, between reason and authority, and to trace it onwards in its course towards a fuller development of the question, we must pass onwards to the commencement of the scholastic philosophy—a philosophy which stands in direct co-ordination with the writings of Augustine. It has been usual amongst philosophical writers to divide the whole scholastic periods into three eras. 1. That which is marked by the absolute subordination of philosophy to theology, *i. e.*, in the sense then employed, to *authority*. 2. That which marks the friendly alliance of philosophy with dogmatic theology; and, 3. That which marks the commencement of a separation between the two, and the dawn of the entire independence of philosophical inquiry. If we adopt this division of the scholastic ages—a division which, in the main, will, I think, be found perfectly coincident with historical fact,—it gives us a good clue by which to trace onwards the antagonism we are now considering, and to estimate the development of the great idea of Christianity under its constantly impelling influence.

The sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, we may consider, were marked by the entire preponderance of the spirit of *authority*, and by that utter decline of all intellectual and

religious vitality which is its inevitable result. The ninth century witnessed in the person of Joannes Scotus Erigena the first feeble attempts of the human reason to reassert its legitimate influence and rightful power in the world. That he admitted the entire subordination of philosophy to authority is, indeed, perfectly true; but yet, within the limits which authority assigns, he maintained the power and the right of the human understanding to demand a rational account of its own belief. He advocated, indeed, the necessity of faith in order to arrive at knowledge; but he affirmed that our faith must endeavor to complete itself by means of *science*,—so that the principle on which he took his stand was, *faith raised to reflective intelligence*, that which Anselm afterwards termed, "*fides quærens intellectum*." Such was the new position with which he startled the death-like repose of his age.

Between the death of Scotus Erigena and the birth of Abelard, a period of 200 years (within a little) intervened; the one representing the commencement of scholasticism, and the other marking well-nigh the close of its first era. The progress of the struggle within these 200 years was very decided, and the minds of the more thoughtful were, accordingly, drawn increasingly away from a blind trust in authority towards the opposite pole. Abelard brought out the office of reason in theological investigation into clearer light than any other man of his age. He condemned the habit of mind, so common in his day, of receiving any dogma, which might be presented, without examination; and although he yielded the prime decision of the *limits* of human knowledge to authority, yet he did not hesitate to affirm, "In omnibus his, quæ ratione discuti possunt, *non est necessarium* Auctoritatis judicium."

The second era of scholasticism was that which is designated by the writings of Albertus Magnus, Thomas

Aquinas, and Dun Scotus. This era forms the very central point of the scholastic philosophy properly so called, and gives us the most complete view we can possibly attain of the relation between reason and authority, as it existed in the middle ages. Human knowledge, on all the higher questions, was still considered to have its *foundation* in a direct and objective revelation; but entirely separate from this, there was supposed to exist a philosophical *organum*, (that, namely, which was first propounded by Aristotle,) through the instrumentality of which theological truth was to be carried back to its first principles, to be tested as to its validity, to be established on reflective or intellectual grounds, and to be developed in one chain of logical order, into a complete system. Between dogmatic theology, therefore, and philosophy, viewed in the light of a logical method, there was now established a perfect unanimity. It could not be said, that the one was above the other; for they were both blended in unison. The dogmatic limits being fixed by authority, it was for scholastic science to enter the stakes, to bid defiance to every opponent, to gird itself to the work of endless disputation, and maintain the dogmas of the Church, whatever they might happen to be, with all the subtlety which logical acumen could supply. The Church gave the *matter*, Aristotle supplied the *form*; and as matter and form are equally necessary for a dogmatic system, the validity of each of these was regarded as being, in its own department, equally unquestionable and equally supreme.

Raymond Lully and Roger Bacon, followed up by Occam and the Nominalists, represent the illuminati of their age, under the third and declining era of the scholastic philosophy. Here we find the first attempts at rendering philosophical inquiry independent of the absolute authority of the Church. The soul of Europe, so long buried under the dead weight of ecclesiastical domination and Aristotelian forms, now

began to struggle for freedom and life. The rise of a native literature, especially in Italy and France; the invention of printing, which soon after ensued; the general disgust and dissatisfaction which began to be felt against the practices and superstitions of the Church; the struggles for a new philosophy and an improved logic;—*all* helped to pave the way for a brighter and happier era. That era was ushered in by the *Protestant Reformation.*

The Reformation was essentially a revolt against authority. It was so equally in Church, and in State, in law, in philosophy, in religion. It presented the aspect of reason and humanity asserting their *right*, and protesting against being any longer held in unlawful bondage. Waiving, however, all consideration of this revolt in other points of view, we have now only to consider it as it affected the development of Christian ideas. That the first Reformers should comprehend the question of religious liberty in all its length and breadth, was not to be expected. They had seen the spirit of man crushed under the domination of a pretended outward infallibility; they had seen the Church assuming the part of a mediator between heaven and earth; they had seen the devastation which was thus made of the noblest moral energies of mankind; and *now* they came forwards, not as casting away all authority in matters of religion, but as protesting against the inordinate claims of the Papal Hierarchy. With this intent they maintained the sufficiency of the Scriptures, as a rule of faith, in contradistinction to the dictates of tradition or the decisions of Councils; and then asserted the right of private judgment in opposition to the mediation of a priesthood, and the consequent responsibility of the individual to God alone, as regards his religious belief and practice.

The affirmation of the *right* of private judgment in all matters of duty and dictates of conscience, is one of the strong-

est claims which Protestantism has upon the eternal gratitude of mankind; but we are far from thinking that it has dealt as yet so successfully with the question of the *possibility* of private judgment, or of the individual reason, in the *search after truth*. The confusion that has existed between these two doctrines (so dissimilar in themselves) has perpetually hindered the advocates of Protestantism from looking the question of reason and authority clearly in the face. The consequence has been, that for three hundred years the most indefinite and ofttimes contradictory notions have been asserted, more or less, by *all* the different Protestant Churches upon the doctrine of private judgment—a doctrine which they have all alike professedly held, and all attempted in their different methods to explain. These attempts to explain a doctrine involving the most momentous questions in the philosophy of human nature, have given rise through the whole history of Protestantism to a perpetual struggle between the two principles of reason and authority. Here, for example, we see the appeal to *authority*, as residing in different *communities*, rendered paramount over the decisions of the individual judgment, and calling down upon the head of the dissentient no very light and endurable penalties. There, again, we find the individual reason boldly asserting its validity against all the catholic religious thinking of the past and the present. One Protestant Church or party grounds its right to coerce private opinion upon the decision of a King or a Parliament; another grounds it upon a purely imaginary outward continuity of apostolical succession; a third grounds it upon some conclave of worthy men who sat in solemn decision upon the doctrines of Scripture some one or two centuries ago, in Westminster, Holland, or Geneva; while a fourth grounds it upon the sharp-sighted individual who was fortunate enough to perpetuate his memory by creating a new sect, and bestowing his name upon it.

Against all these various assertions of authority, on the other hand, there has ever been in the precincts of Protestantism a struggle in behalf of the perfect competency of the individual to shape his belief as he will, upon the data which God has furnished us in nature and revelation. Nay, what is more, this species of individualism is pretty evidently the natural tendency of a great part of the Protestantism which has hitherto existed,—or, we should perhaps rather say, the natural tendency of the doctrine of private judgment, as frequently professed by Protestant Churches. This doctrine asserts, that the data of Christian theology lie before us, fixed and complete in the Bible; that theology itself results from an inductive process, that, namely, of gathering out, comparing, and arranging Scripture passages, so as to form a connected body of doctrine; that, as every man has the Bible in his hands, and is furnished with an understanding capable of carrying on the process of induction, so every man of sufficient learning has in possession the complete apparatus for constructing a perfect theology. This view of the case, however simple at first sight, is soon found, as we have before seen, to be encompassed with unnumbered difficulties. It entirely overlooks the fact, that our induction will be altogether different, according to the *conception* we attach to the terms employed in Scripture; according to the *intuitions* we may happen to possess of spiritual things; according to the *whole state of our inward religious life*. This inward religious life, let it be observed, is due mainly to the religious consciousness of the age in which we live,—to the present development of Christian ideas in the flow of human history; so that the theory of private judgment, and the mode of constructing a theology grounded upon it, cuts us off entirely as individuals from the whole growth of the universal Christian consciousness of mankind, and throws the validity of our

whole theology back upon a mere formal process of logical induction.

To contravene the authorized license, which the individual may, on these principles, indulge in, (since every one can say that the results of *his* inductions are as valid as those of any one else,) the majority of Protestants have brought in the weight of their several communities, and attempted by the "argumentum ad verecundiam" to circumscribe the unfettered exercise of private judgment. But this attempt is ever hampered with *two* objections: first, that it is not very consistent with the professed right of *individual* interpretation at all; and, secondly, that out of all the different communities to whose authority appeal is made, the really honest and unprejudiced inquirer does not know which is most worthy of his confidence; while, if he admit them *all*, he finds the doctrine of one to be, for the most part, neutralized by that of others. On the whole, therefore, it must be admitted, that, since the confidence of mankind has been shaken in the fixed infallibility of the Papal Church, no perfectly clear and intelligible principle of appeal has been put into its place. The age in which we now live, an age universally fruitful in independent thinking, is fast driving the question of reason and authority as held by the Protestant world to a point. Multitudes, fully conscious of the logical untenableness of their ordinary profession, have been impelled to one or the other extreme. Some, following out the principle of individualism, have seen it land them in the lowest abyss of Rationalism; while others, naturally shrinking from such a result, have thrown themselves into the arms of absolute authority. On this spectacle the Christian world is now gazing, and many is the throbbing heart which is asking, at the hands of the Protestant Church, in which its faith has been nurtured, an intelligible solution of this all-important question.

Are we, then, at present in a fair way for obtaining such a solution; or must we relinquish all hope of seeing the question of reason and authority placed upon a more intelligible basis? The history of the past, I think, indicates to us most plainly that, although we are not to look for an absolute and final settlement of the question, yet there is every reason for us to hope that it may be thrown into yet new relations, or merged into yet higher principles, and that it will in this way lead to a temporary resting-place and a yet fuller development of Christian ideas in the world.

In examining the controversies of past ages we see that every fresh statement of the relations between reason and authority has been accompanied with, and superinduced by, the growth of some peculiar system of philosophy. The Gnostic controversy on the subject was occasioned and kept alive by the influence of Oriental and Platonic doctrines. So soon as these died away, the controversy, as then carried on, died away with them. From the age of Augustine down to the close of the scholastic period, the philosophy of Aristotle held the supreme rule over the intelligence of mankind, and the struggle between reason and authority was carried on solely by the aid of the Aristotelian organum. When the philosophical technology of the scholastic age disappeared, the whole of the grounds on which that struggle had been kept up disappeared with it, and the question was merged into a still higher form. To the Aristotelian organum succeeded the Baconian; and just in proportion as it gained general acknowledgment as a philosophical method, the process of theological inquiry assumed the form of an induction from scriptural data.

The era of induction has, without doubt, played a splendid part in the development of humanity; and where its application is legitimate is still destined to make noble achievements. But the dawn of another philosophical era

is even now at hand. It has already been abundantly proved, that purely inductive processes are not the sole method we have to employ; that induction itself, indeed, rests upon *à priori*, or transcendental principles; and that in all the higher branches of philosophical inquiry,—those, namely, which lie beyond the region of empirical facts,—we must appeal to some standard higher than that which results from a mere inductive procedure, and employ a method of research very different from the Baconian organum. The inductive method of inquiry has argued the question of reason and authority upon principles which are utterly incapable of grappling with its real difficulties,—principles which must consequently for ever fail of bringing it to any satisfactory termination. The imposing appearance of induction, as applied to theology, has, it is true, sufficed to carry away many with the hope of finding *there* a final repose, and of reaping fruits in theological research akin to the noble results of physical investigation. But the hollowness of this expectation has become already visible to the foremost thinkers of our age. Already is it seen that the true advancement of theology does not depend so much upon any logical or purely inductive processes applied to the scriptural data, as upon the clearing of our religious intuitions, and the higher development of our whole religious consciousness. Thus, as a higher and more spiritual philosophy advances, the arena of theological research will be removed more and more from the region of these mere mechanical and inductive principles, and the main efforts of theologians be directed to the development of those lofty spiritual intuitions, in which Christianity, *as a religion*, essentially consists, and by the light of which alone we can interpret the language either of nature or revelation.

We affirm it, therefore, as an expectation which, if there

be any truth in the significancy of the past, must *inevitably* be realized: that the scattered and disjointed elements of Protestantism, those pulverized fragments of our religious life, which have been isolated by the asserted supremacy of the individual judgment, and the all-sufficiency of logical processes, must ere long seek for a new and a higher *unity* in the intuitional consciousness. We regard it as a moral certainty, that with the development of a new philosophy a new *method* will be introduced into theological inquiry; and the antagonism between reason and authority will find, at least, a *temporary* resting-place in a more perfect critique of the essential elements of reason, and the essential nature of a Divine inspiration.

Under these influences we look for a broader and purer development of the religious life. The worship of images which the Iconoclasts of the middle ages failed to extinguish, and which it was left for Protestantism to destroy, has long passed away from the minds of the enlightened; but the worship of propositions has been too often substituted in its place. In the next great historical era of the Christian life, we shall get beyond the worship of dogmas, and find that the Church has been unrighteously placing those productions of human reason on a level with the Divine *life* in its immediate emanation from the Most High.

We are not ignorant or thoughtless enough to look even then for a cessation from all antagonism in the Christian Church. All we look for is a continuous progress towards *light* and towards *love*. Were antagonism entirely to cease, the life of Christianity would be paralyzed; but still that antagonism may become more pure, more intelligent, and, if we may so say, more peaceful. Antagonism once led the vanquished to the Inquisition, the fagot, the stake. It now confines its penalties to social contempt and well-rounded

abuse. We, or our immediate posterity, may yet live to see religious antagonism performing its office, without carrying with it either a penalty or a sting. Were the significancy of the past but rightly understood, it must materially help forwards that great and much longed-for result.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE RELATION BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.

THE end of *one* philosophical book ought to be the beginning of another. So unceasing is the flow of human thought, that, whatever conclusions we arrive at, they are but the starting-points of new analyses and fresh investigations. In the foregoing discussions upon the philosophy of religion, we are far from imagining that we have exhausted the subject, or brought the questions that have been raised and mooted to their last analysis. So far from that, the most we can expect to have accomplished is, to have cleared away a few errors, to have put the subject in a somewhat more philosophical point of view than that in which it is popularly regarded, and thus to have brought it into the track of further elucidation for the future. The object of this concluding chapter, then, is to sum up the points we have gained in the foregoing considerations, and to leave the question concerning the philosophy of religion in such a state, that it may the more easily lie open to renewed investigations.

That there is *some* connection between philosophy and religion is manifest from the very slightest consideration, since all those mental processes, which are the object-matter of psychological research, are indissolubly blended with the subjective phases of the religious life. The great point to be determined is, *how far that connection extends*. However

closely the two may seem to unite in the region where the respective subjects insensibly shade off into each other, yet it is by no means so easy to realize a connection between their more extreme points; and it is just in this respect, accordingly, that fresh light requires to be shed upon the whole subject.

Now the question of religion merges, in the present day, into that of Christianity; and Christianity, when reflectively realized, becomes a formal system of theology. We see, therefore, at the one extreme of the two subjects now before us, pure philosophical thinking, developed according to the fixed laws of the human mind; and at the other extreme, a complete system of Christian theology, with all its supernatural elements interwoven into it. The philosophy of religion takes these two points *as data;* it sees them existing as *facts* in the human consciousness; and the problem it has to solve is, to *connect* them in such a manner that their true relationship becomes manifest, and their respective grounds of certitude clearly determined.

That the relationship existing between *philosophy* and *theology* should be very indistinctly realized, is not, in truth, to be wondered at, when we consider how indistinct has been the notion attached to the very terms themselves. The idea of *philosophy* we well know has been, and still is, frequently so indefinitely understood, that many regard it as being altogether limited to the analysis and classification of the powers and faculties of the human mind; and apply it even to these in very different acceptations. The idea of *theology* in like manner has been equally vague; so much so, that many indeed have imagined it to consist in a simple classification of Scripture passages, utterly unconscious how impossible it is to make any such classification at all, without involving human principles both of analysis and interpretation.

Accordingly, the relationship, supposed to exist between

the two, has necessarily varied with the scope that has been respectively assigned to them; nay, further, we may expect it *still* to vary, for in proportion as the conceptions of philosophy and theology become more developed, we shall find that their respective spheres stand very differently related towards each other. The most accurate way, therefore, in which we can regard this relationship is, to view it in the light of a *fluent*, rather than a *constant* expression. As analysis becomes closer, and what appeared to be original elements become perhaps resolved into their constituent parts, we shall ever find that our philosophy requires a different expression in relation to our theology, while our theology perpetually requires a different statement in relation to philosophical research. Without further preliminaries, however, let us come to the question itself.

And, first of all, let it be remarked, that there are two extremes into which mankind have very generally run in reference to the relationship we are now considering. Some have regarded Christian theology as a system of truth, which has come down to us *entire*, in precise and reflective terms from God himself. Others, again, have regarded it as being wholly based upon the laws and principles of human reason. Many, indeed, have occupied a position intermediate between these extremes, inasmuch as they have endeavored to divaricate the whole body of Christian theology, and show what portion has come from the human reason, and what is a direct impartation from Heaven. But still the two great tendencies in the views which have been taken upon this subject, are those which point to the extremes above indicated; extremes which have pervaded, more or less, the whole history of the Christian Church.

In those ages which were characterized by an almost entire subserviency to the Roman Catholic Church, the prevailing notion (cherished, moreover, by that Church in its high-

est functionaries,) was,—that theology was entirely a gift, imparted by God to those who were specially appointed to be administrators of divine truth, and that humanity had nothing whatever to do with its formal construction, and no power to judge of its real validity. The opposite tendency, which developed itself, distinctly though somewhat feebly, in the more philosophical thinkers of those ages, was seen in the struggle they manifested to find a reasonable ground for their faith. The blind faith of the multitude, unconscious of any subjective process, by which the doctrines inculcated could have been formed, attributed the whole system to the direct agency of God, operating through his appointed ministers; on the contrary, it was the "*fides quærens intellectum*," which manifested the desire to possess a more rational basis for theological truth. Hence the vast admixture of philosophical speculation which we find in the theology of the middle ages; an admixture which has been absorbed into the theology of the present day, without our being conscious often of its real origin.

The Reformation introduced a new order of things into the whole intellectual life of Europe. Luther abjured the authority of the Church,—and with this abjuration threw the whole of the fundamental questions, upon the relationship of theology to philosophical thinking, into a new form. Having thoroughly loosed his hold from the great self-created authority of the Papal See, he had naturally to consider, what could now be put in its place as a guide to the restless activity of the human reason. Accordingly, in place of the authority of the Church, he held up the authority of the *Scriptures*—pointing to these and these alone as possessing an all-sufficiency, for the guidance of the human soul to purity and to God.

The true doctrines of the Reformation can only be appreciated, when viewed in connection with the system to

which they were directly opposed. Luther's notion of the sufficiency of Scripture, as a guide to human faith, was a very different thing from that which it is now popularly imagined to have been. The mind of that great Reformer was strictly of the intuitional, almost indeed of the mystical order. No man perceived clearer than he, the vast distinction between a pure living faith, as a spontaneous principle leading the soul to the direct perception of heavenly things, and a mere intellectual assent to doctrines logically propounded. The Church had hitherto professed herself the sole administrator of divine grace, through whose agency alone, pardon, and peace, and piety, were to be communicated to mankind. It was in opposition to *these* pretensions that Luther set up the doctrines of the sufficiency of Scripture, and justification by faith. The *visible* Church, he affirmed, is not the sole channel of the Christian life. Man cannot be justified and accepted of God by her mediating agency. This is a matter which lies entirely between the conscience of the individual, and the great Judge of all. Man is to be accepted, not by virtue of his conformity to any outward authority, but by virtue of the *interior principle of faith*—personal faith in God, and his revealed mercy to the world. For the production, and the nurturing of such a faith, the Scriptures, he declared, are all-sufficient. They contain the history and teaching of Christ—they manifest the spiritual life of the apostles—they have a mighty power to affect the human heart—they are the promised channels through which the influences of the spirit of Christ are conveyed to the inmost soul of the believer.

Now this doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is manifestly opposed to two other principles; it is opposed, on the one hand, as we have seen, to the pretensions of the Church; but it is equally opposed, on the other hand, to the pretensions of human reason, to be the source and guide of our

faith. Luther, as is well known, declaimed with all his accustomed point and energy against the notion that *philosophy* or human reason could be a principle of spiritual faith in man.* His intention in so doing was to make *religion*—that vital, active, spontaneous principle of truth and holiness—independent of reason or philosophy; he never thought to make *theology* independent of it. He affirmed:—"the grace of God which we have declared to us in the Bible is enough for every man. By this grace the soul can be transformed and the man saved. Without it the efforts of the natural reason are poor, weak, and inefficient for any real spiritual good." But he never supposed that reason could be dispensed with in the construction of a theology, and never affirmed its blindness or inefficiency in this point of view. Nay, he says, "that this light of reason is a portion of the true light—that God himself has implanted it for our guidance—that it can never be extinguished." All these and similar expressions show us the twofold view, which ever presented itself to the mind of Luther, namely, that human reason as a guide to living faith was worthless; that, as a guide to a logical and scientific theology, it could never be dispensed with. Had these two points been kept distinct, as they were in the mind of the great Reformer, there would

* We give the following specimens of Luther's declamation on this subject:—Nun hilft das alles nicht bei der eigensinnigen Vernunft; sie höret weder Wort, Schrift, noch Erleuchtung, wie es Gott mit ihr versuchet. Die Shrift and Bücher unterdrucket und verbrennet Sie, wie der König Johakim thät Jeremia Büchern. Again he says—Was ist es denn für eine Thorheit, das wir uns unterstehen wollen, in Himmel hinauf zu steigen, und die Gottheit nach unserer tollen, verblendeten, und verderbten Vernunft zu richten. Again, Es ist kein Ding, das dem Glauben mehr entgegen ist, als das Gesetz und die Vernunft:—Sie ist Gottes ärgste Feindinn. Once again still more racily he says—Des Teufels Braut, Ratio—die Schöne Meze, was sie sagt meinet sie, es sei der Heilige Geist,—aber es ist die höchste Hure, die der Teufel hat.

have been in the Protestantism of succeeding ages at once a check against the pretensions of rationalism, and a principle of spiritual life and progress, such as would have prevented the reappearance of that mere mechanical supernaturalism, which, while it renounced one infallibility, hesitated not to erect and establish another almost equally oppressive.

In Melancthon, again, and still more in Calvin and Zuinglius, we see a most free and unhesitating employment of the critical reason in the construction of their several theological systems. Accordingly the notions and the phraseology of the scholastic philosophy (the great logical organum of that day), notwithstanding their being so decidedly repudiated by Luther, and the other Reformers, as having nothing to do with Christian faith as a living principle, yet came naturally over into the body of Protestant theology as a thing which appeared absolutely inevitable. In fact, the real question between reason and authority was left very much where it was before; it was thrown, indeed, into new relations, but its solution appeared almost as distant as ever.

Throughout the whole history of Protestantism, indeed, the two opposing tendencies we have described have constantly *reappeared* in the views entertained respecting the mutual relationship of philosophy and theology. In the popular mind, where but slight opportunity can naturally exist for tracing the historical growth of our theological ideas, the prevailing tendency has been that of dissevering theology altogether from philosophical thinking, and regarding it as a Divine gift mechanically imparted. On the other hand, the difficulties which beset this theory have driven many to the opposite extreme of making philosophy the sole basis of theology. Each party sees the other involved in absolute paradox. The advocates of a mechanical supernaturalism point tauntingly to the endless diversities and hopeless uncertainty of Rationalism, and show that absolute Skepticism is its only

ultimate refuge. The advocates of Reason as the basis of theology in their turn show the extreme Supernaturalist to be involved in a vicious circle; for while he declaims against Reason as leading to no certain conclusion whatever, yet he is obliged to trust to it entirely in discerning a true revelation from what is false, and interpreting it when decided upon. In fact, they show, and that quite correctly, that the common supernaturalism which accepts the Bible as a *verbal* revelation, and trusts to the individual reason as its expounder, is involved in the very same difficulties, leads to the very same diversities, and is based upon the very same principles as open Rationalism itself. The attempts to mediate between these two extremes have generally confined themselves almost entirely to a separation of the elements of theology into the Divine and the human. In this way a portion of truth has been conceded to both parties; but in such a way as to give but little rest or satisfaction to either. The question ever and anon returned—which portion *is* human, and which *is* Divine? The decision of this point being still left to the reason of the inquirer, the same disputes naturally reappeared, and the solution was still as far as ever in the distance.

The honor of throwing fresh light upon this perplexed subject was due to the genius of Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher possessed advantages and qualifications rarely enjoyed, even by the most favored, for penetrating into the grounds of Christian theology. His early education amongst the Moravians had imbued his mind with that deep tone of fervid piety which so strikingly characterized it, especially at the two extremes of his life; on the other hand, his devotion to literature and vast attainments in philosophy placed him in the very highest position for testing the claims of historical criticism and metaphysical analysis. Schleiermacher, in fact, had united, in his own personality, both the extremes

we have above indicated: in this way he possessed means of comparing their respective claims and perceiving their respective relationships, such as could only occur to a mind in which both sides of the question had, as it were, realized themselves simultaneously. He was conscious on the one hand that the deep inward piety in which his own life had been nurtured could in no sense be based upon speculative or rationalistic grounds. Its whole complexion he saw to be entirely distinct from mere reason, borrowing from it neither its light nor its certitude, and springing up in the bosom of the holy, quite irrespective of any logical proofs by which its validity could be urged. On the other hand, he saw with equal clearness that theology could not be an immediate impartation from Heaven; that, in fact, it is purely human in its form; and that it necessarily involves a portion of human imperfection. In this way *three* things became abundantly evident;—first, that the religious life is a fact in human nature in no sense evolved from any kind of speculative reasoning; secondly, that, notwithstanding this, it is a fact the evidence of whose validity must be centred not in the letter of a book, but in the depths of *human experience;* and, thirdly, that theology is the product of two factors—being evolved out of the living consciousness of the pious, by the attempt of their reflective understanding to render an account of their inward spiritual life. The paradoxes before involved in the controversy thus became merged into a higher unity. The Rationalist was answered on the one side, the mechanical Supernaturalist on the other; the dependence of Christian theology upon human philosophy was refuted, but its emanation from the interior consciousness of humanity as enlightened and purified by the Gospel of Christ was maintained.

The position then, we have now to illustrate is this, that Christian theology is *not* dependent upon human reason *absolutely* considered on the one side, nor upon the letter of Scrip-

ture on the other, either in respect to its source or to its certitude; but that *it is* dependent in both ways upon the actual experiences of the human consciousness. This position, it will be seen, occupies a ground which, while it avoids the paradoxes in which the other principles we have noticed are involved, yet lays hold of the strong points belonging to both. With the Rationalist it concedes the point in which he is so impregnably intrenched: namely, that there cannot be, without involving a paradox, a basis of certitude *out of* humanity itself. With the Supernaturalist it maintains, that the spiritual is not to be judged of by the natural reason, but that Christianity brings with it its own evidence, and rests upon its own foundation.

With regard to the former of these positions—that, namely, which denies the right and the possibility of Christianity being judged by the absolute reason, we make the following remarks:—

1. That either to comprehend or to judge of the truth involved in Christianity, requires a special range of inward experience, to which human reason, absolutely considered, does not reach. We do not at all deny but that the authenticity of the *facts* connected with the establishment of Christianity, and of the sacred writings themselves, have to be judged of on those ordinary principles of human testimony to which every thing of an historical nature must positively appeal. But the authenticity of these facts is one thing, while the whole system of truth which is taught in connection with them is another. A man may grant the whole of the historical fact of the New Testament, and yet be utterly ignorant of *Christianity itself*, and even consciously reject its veracity. The grounds on which the truth of Christ reposes are not those of testimony; testimony can only assure us of things which took place outwardly, visibly, palpably to the senses, in the actual region of human history; it is a far higher and

surer witness which convinces us of those Divine realities which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man ever before conceived. Such a witness may partly take its start from the historical fact, and partly be superinduced as a portion of human experience, by its agency; but just as the writings of some ancient book on mathematics may convince us of the truth of certain theorems, not by virtue of its historical authenticity, but by virtue of the rational evidence it brings home to our minds; so also do the Scriptures, and the facts of their early history, convince us of the veracity of Christianity as a Divine system of truth and duty, not simply because they are authentic, but because of the irresistible appeals they make to the reason, the conscience, and the whole spiritual nature of man.

Now, what we mean by affirming that the power of judging respecting Christian truth supposes a special range of inward experience, is this,—that, even admitting a man to know *all* that can be known respecting the historical authenticity of the New Testament, yet, until he has realized the vastness, the sublimity, the moral power of the truth itself, he cannot appreciate its real character or its strongest evidences. He judges every thing, accordingly, by a lower standard, brings the spiritual grandeur of heavenly truth down to the laws and level of mere natural reason, and instead of perceiving its harmony with the soul, with nature, and with God, enstamps it, perhaps, as unreasonable, because *his own reason* has not yet grasped its ideas. We need not enter into any particular portions of Christian doctrine to prove the truth of what we now assert. But let any one consider whether a man, unawakened to the sense of sin, can comprehend the Christian idea of human depravity; whether any one who has no lofty idea of holiness can comprehend the Christian idea of God, or the Christian scale of human duty; whether any one who has had no deep stirrings of the im-

mortal within him can estimate the reality of spiritual agency here, or eternal life hereafter. Exactly in the same manner as the ethics of the human conscience, absolutely considered, differ vastly from the ethics of true Christianity, just because under its influence the conscience itself takes a wider range, and has a deeper insight into man's moral responsibility; so also will the results and conclusions of the religious sentiment in man, regarded only in its broad, generic, or absolute character, be immeasurably *inferior* to the conclusions it will draw when illumined and impregnated with the fire and force of the Christian revelation. The spiritual must be judged of *by the spiritual*, and by them alone.

2. The conclusion we have thus arrived at harmonizes perfectly with the laws of intuition as we have before developed them. Were the power of religious intuition *perfect*, by virtue of an entire harmony of our interior being with moral and spiritual truth, then, indeed, as has been before shown, we should see every thing in its true light, and judge of it by its own immediate evidence. Consequently, just in proportion as this power of intuition is *restored*, by the inward harmonizing of our whole nature with what is holy, just, and true, will our capacity of seeing, grasping, and appreciating the highest Christian ideas become so much the greater. To place a man whose religious nature has not been awakened, whose mind has never been brought into the least harmony with Divine things, whose intuitions are contracted and distorted,—to place such a man in the same position for *testing* what is divinely true, with the man whose whole nature has been elevated and purified, is fearfully absurd. The former may possess reason enough in its general acceptation; but it is the latter alone to whom the true relations of Divine things are fully open, and who possesses the *light* by which they can be read and interpreted.

3. That reason, in its absolute sense, does not and cannot

form the basis of Christian truth, is proved by *facts*. If the light of nature (which we may use as being synonymous with the term reason in this its general signification,) were sufficient to lead any mind into the full brightness of Christian truth and purity, *then* we should surely have some instances to cite in which it had performed this inestimable work of human restoration. But what is the fact? Mere natural religion, which is the only proper expression or product of the light of nature, has ever been the most impotent of all things, as it regards the direct influencing of human character. It is always too general to give any distinctive type to man's spiritual emotions or religious aspirations. It points out to us, indeed, certain fundamental truths which we must all admit; but in so doing, it points out only with a dim generality the very same things which the Christian consciousness, when once awakened, brings before us in the most living forms and the most distinctive colors. To make Christianity entirely dependent upon this natural light, would involve its virtual *extinction*; for one element after another, when found to be incapable of deduction from these general grounds, must be lopped off, until the dead trunk only would be left —a monitory pillar, like Lot's wife, to remind us of the folly (when once within the region of a new creation) of looking back upon the "beggarly elements" of this world.

4. That Christian truth has a basis independent of the light of nature, is affirmed by the whole spirit of our Lord's teaching, and that of the apostles.

"The light of the body is the eye: if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." In this passage, the perception of truth is clearly shown to depend upon the state of the interior moral consciousness, on the power of spiritual intuition. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see (have a clear intuition of) God." "If any man

will *do* my will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." So also in the writings of the apostles: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

From all these considerations, then, we conclude, that, while the authenticity of the historical facts connected with the origin of Christianity is to be judged of by the ordinary laws of evidence; yet the truths of Christianity themselves must rest, not upon any absolute laws of inference or reason, but upon *their own evidence* as presented to the mind of humanity, when enlightened and purified by their own proper agency.

But now the mechanical Supernaturalist steps in and says—*true*, the doctrines of Christianity do not rest upon the natural reason; but is not their real and authoritative basis found in the fact of their being conveyed to us *definitively* in the Bible?

Against this theory it will not be needful for us to repeat the arguments already urged. We merely remind the reader that it is a theory, entirely inconsistent with the historical facts connected with the rise and growth of theology in the bosom of religious communities—that it is altogether incompatible with the whole character of the Bible, which is moral in its entire construction and not scientific; that it is contrary to the spirit of the apostles, who appealed, not to the letter, but to the intrinsic power of Christian truth; that it will not in any way cohere with that spirit of perpetual progress which is the very life of the Christian Church; and, finally, that, if duly carried out, it will throw the determination of every truth *at last* upon the individual reason, and

drive us into the very central principle of the old Rationalism.

We see, then, that Christianity does not base itself either upon the absolute reason or light of nature on the one side, nor upon the letter of revelation on the other. Just as it was established in the world, and its certitude made manifest long before a single line of the New Testament was penned, and two centuries before the canon was complete, so also must it be established *now*, upon grounds quite distinct from mere verbal authority—upon grounds, in fact, which appeal to the inmost consciousness of mankind.

Here, then, the principle asserted comes to our relief, and shows us how we may find a resting-place in human experience itself. Man was created holy; his entire nature was formed upon a plan to sympathize with every thing great, pure, and Divine; his reason was constructed in harmony with eternal truth; his conscience with eternal *right*. While under the power of evil, this pristine nobility and purity of nature is marred, and in a certain degree *suspended;* he perceives not the truth in its living unity; he feels not the sublimity and sanctity of the highest virtue; but once clear away the mist and miasma of his depravity from the heart, and exactly in the same proportion there is developed within him a moral and a spiritual sensibility, which can at once feel and pronounce what it is that is just, holy, and *true*. This spiritual sensibility, thus newly awakened and nurtured under the moral power of Christianity, becomes gradually consolidated and outwardly realized, through the medium of *fellowship*. It comes thus to constitute the religious life or consciousness of a community; and this religious life gives reflective expression to the great elements of Divine truth, which it realizes and loves, in those general affirmations respecting God and man, respecting sin and holiness, re-

specting human danger and human recovery, which form the foundation of its *doctrinal profession*.

The evidence of the validity of these fervent experiences lies in their *clearness*, their *uniformity*, their perpetual progress to *universality*. This it is which forms the great moral foundation on which they are based, by virtue of which they appeal at once to the deepest convictions of the human heart, and acquire a verity which no process of historical proof could ever give them. Such experiences, however, when once awakened, will soon be recognized as identical with those which appear in the whole spirit of the apostolic labors and teaching; so that they can be readily compared with those great typical examples of Christian perfection which we have in the inspired disciples themselves. And thus all the outward testimony to their Divine commission *adds* itself to the witness of the spirit within, so as to form a basis of moral evidence, which no human subtlety will ever be able to shake. In this view of Christian theology, we see it invested with a character purely historical, infinitely more so indeed than when it is regarded as a fixed logical result from the letter of the word; we see it is a great living reality in the deepest consciousness of sanctified humanity, not a stereotyped system of dry propositions; we see it, finally, as a progressive principle, giving vitality by its very progress, and exciting the unwearied hopes of the faithful in a future age of moral and intellectual elevation, lying dimly, yet surely, before us.

The relationship of philosophy to theology becomes, upon these grounds, far more definite and intelligible than upon any other. If philosophy is to be put in opposition solely to a verbal revelation, and to include every thing which springs from the actual consciousness of man under whatever circumstances, then, indeed, we see not that there is any possibility of making the grounds of philosophy and those of the-

ology in any way distinct; but if philosophy be regarded, as it ought to be, as the mere product of the absolute reason, or the light of nature in its general acceptation, then, indeed, we vindicate for Christianity a basis which lies entirely without its province, a basis which first brings with it its own light, and then furnishes its own evidence to the enlightened mind.

We do not pretend, indeed, when we have established our point thus far, that our analysis is perfect, or that our conclusions have reached their furthest goal. All we can hope to have accomplished is to have taken one step in the process of elucidation, to have cleared away some few of the clouds which hung about the question, and to have pointed out the direction in which we may enter upon future investigations, and realize from them still further and brighter results.

POSTSCRIPT TO CHAPTER XII.

Since this last chapter has been completed, I have been fortunate enough to procure a copy of an elaborate work, entitled, "Theologische Ethik," by Dr. Richard Rothe, Professor of Theology at Heidelberg, and Director of the Protestant Seminary there. In the Introduction to that work, the author has developed with great perspicuity the Idea of Speculative Theology, and its relation to philosophy generally. The conclusions to which he has arrived I find to be so strikingly consonant with my own, that I have thought it right to translate and append nearly the whole section; making only some few unimportant abbreviations, owing to the diffuseness of the style in the original.

---

§ 1. Speculative thinking is to be regarded as distinct from that which is barely reflective and discursive. They are distinguished in this respect—that the latter is *à posteriori*, the former *à priori;*

the one, observing and critical, the other, constructive. Reflective thinking must have its object given, whether that object be barely perceived, or whether it be the duly-formed notion of a thing;—speculative thinking originates its own thoughts; it evolves them out of itself by an inward logical necessity, and constructs an entire system of such a nature, that each single thought implicitly supposes the whole. This system of *à priori* thought, to be successful as a speculation, must be an absolutely corresponding and consistent image of the reality; but the speculative process itself takes no thought whether there be such a reality existing, or how the ideas, which it constructs, are related to it; but, without looking either to the right hand or the left, it follows barely the course of logical necessity, until it has accomplished the whole circle of its ideas, and constructed a complete system. Then, first, the speculative thinker looks out of himself, in order to compare the system of thought, which he has independently constructed, with the objective reality, and to assure himself of his correctness by such a comparison; but in so doing he is stepping out of the region of *speculative* into that of *reflective* thinking. The necessity of such a verification, indeed, he acknowledges unconditionally; but he distinguishes clearly between the speculation itself and that reflective, critical process by which alone such a verification can be realized. With reference to the empirical reality around him,—he acknowledges that his speculation is incorrect if his system of thought is not *there* reproduced, but he still persists that he has to complete his speculative labor without any direct reference to it. He concludes rather from a clear want of correspondency, that he has speculated incorrectly; and can look for his error in nothing else than in his departure from a strict obedience to the laws of logic. Forthwith, then, he destroys his laboriously-constructed system; but, if he again proceed to construct another, he must proceed upon the very same principle as before—*i. e.*, by looking solely into his own thoughts, as though there were no world around him. He is far removed from that foolish pride which undervalues reflective thinking, for he knows that it is the only school in which the ability to speculate can be attained: but he maintains, none the less, that both kinds of thinking—the reflective and the speculative—are essentially different, in order that he may assert the indispensableness of both.

Moreover, he knows well that they cannot remain so far apart, that reflection is not constrained to mingle itself up with speculation. To the really speculative thinker this can never be imaginable; (since every dialectical process, without which speculation cannot move one step forward, is a *reflective* process;) but in this combination of the reflective with the speculative procedure, he is conscious of speculation being purposely interrupted by reflection; yet, however necessary this may be, he demands that the thinker should have a clear consciousness of his transition from one mode of mental activity to another, and protests against an entire blending of the two processes. No sound speculative head, assuredly, will fall into the delusion, that he can succeed by means of his speculation fully and correctly to reconstruct the universe in his ideas. He must not only think ridiculously much of himself, but lamentably little of the universe, who can befool himself with such a childish expectation. The clear and lively consciousness of the incommensurability of the great problem of philosophy with his own individual speculative capacity, is the only natural state of mind to any intelligent man, who goes forth seriously to the work of speculation. But this incommensurability with his own individual thinking does not imply an incommensurability with the thinking of humanity generally. This he unconditionally denies. The individual man, he affirms, can never satisfactorily solve the problem of speculation: but humanity can—must, and will satisfactorily solve it. He knows, with unconditional certainty, that he will not himself really succeed with it,—that its product will not be a fully satisfactory one; nay, that it will not be so satisfactory even to himself, that he could remain by it unconditionally. But this does not diminish either his courage or his enthusiasm. What he cannot perform himself, he knows others will perform after him; and feels that patience will at length conduct us to the goal.

The loftier the range of the matter, so much the more worthy is it of his most self-sacrificing and most unreserved devotion. Though he succeed not in satisfying himself, yet he will satisfy his calling. The progress, indeed, which the knowledge of truth will make through instrumentality will, at the very best, be an infinitely small one; but he despises not the smallest progress, knowing well

that the greatest advances are only composed of many small ones; and he does not think himself too good to take upon himself the toil of his own duty. Deeply convinced that all our knowledge is gradual, he bends his whole energy upon its advancement; he knows that he has to think of nothing more than of a small *approximation* to the full and perfect knowledge of the truth; but he doubts not, that, by this method of slow and scarce perceptible approximation, the end can be really attained, however late, and thus holds himself alike far from a childish confidence in the infallibility of his own knowledge, and from the idle and unmanly despair of the possibility of a real knowledge at all—two extremes into which the thinking minds of all epochs have commonly divided themselves, and which are both alike destructive to true science.

§ 2. It is a common notion that speculation starts *from nothing*, without any pre-supposition; and the foregoing exposition of the idea might *seem* to confirm this view. Were this the case, no distinction could then be conceivable between theological and philosophical specnlation. But we deny confidently that such a baselessness lies in the idea of speculation. Where could there be, or ever have been, on such conditions, a speculator? Out of nothing, in the hands of a creature, nothing will proceed to all eternity. It is the prerogative of God alone to make something out of nothing. But even if this were the true idea of speculation, where could we find a man, such as would be demanded for the work of speculating, —where amongst us all, who are not the commencers of an absolutely new work, but only the continuers of one, that is come down to us from a long antiquity. The man who is absolutely void of a pre-supposition, would be absolutely empty. But such a man there cannot be, for every person capable of thought has a history behind him, (as the foundation upon which alone he can rest,—and upon which alone he can find a starting-place for his thoughts,) namely, his own personal history, and that vast history of our race, into which his own is organically interwoven. The more indissolubly his self-consciousness rests upon this double history, and the more perfectly it is borne up by it, so much the more vigorous is the human individual, both for thought and for speculation; but with so much the fuller data does his speculation start. We should say,

therefore, that with how much more speculation begins, so much the more comes out of it. Experience here is evidently on our side; whether we consider the speculation of an individual, of a generation, of a whole people, or an entire era. If, however, speculation cannot start with nothing, neither, on the other hand, can it assume the totality of what is given,—but it must commence only with *one single datum*, in which the whole is implicitly involved. It must abstract, and lay aside much, from the immediate certainty that is directly presented; but if nothing remains over as immediately certain, it can have no commencement whatever; because it entirely fails of a δός μοι πού στῶ. It must absolutely possess some capital which it can apply, and with which carry on its intellectual business; it must, therefore, have something which is absolutely and immediately certain, and from this one thing will deduce all the rest, otherwise it would fail in the unity of its knowledge.

Accordingly, the position which the speculator takes is essentially this:—he falls back upon the datum of his consciousness, which has *for him* the most immediate certitude; and leaving all other possible data in abeyance, construes the universe out of that alone, purely by virtue of the Dialectic residing in it. This primary datum too for our thinking must contain in it the logical necessity of not remaining fixed in it alone, as immediately given, but of going forth beyond it; it must, by virtue of its inherent Dialectic, draw forth from itself a connected chain of ideas, which does not break off before it comes back again to its starting-point, but forms itself into a veritable system, in which the universe lies ideally included. The act from which speculation takes its start is, therefore, not speculative, but an act of reflection.

§ 3. It is then indifferent which one, out of the whole of the data of consciousness, the speculator chooses, as his primary standpoint?—is the choice of it absolutely capricious? Certainly not. It must be some one of the real primary data of *self-consciousness*, one to him immediately certain, and that too not only accidentally but necessarily, not only subjectively viewed, but objectively. Speculation, therefore, must absolutely go back to that primary datum of the human consciousness, the immediate unconditional certitude of which is, *for us*, the absolute condition of thinking generally. But

this is no other than the human consciousness itself in its absolute purity, and after the fullest abstraction of every determinate object—otherwise termed pure subjective self-consciousness. If, as we said, the essential problem of speculation is to bring home the universe, generally, to our self-consciousness, this self-consciousness must be something for us immediately certain; and, as we know, this alone can be immediately certain to us, and no other firm ground whatever have we as a starting-point under our feet. It is, therefore, self-consciousness, and this only, from which speculation can take its start. In fact, speculative philosophy, since it has established itself in its purity, has always proceeded in this way in all the different schools. It has always been a sheer piece of pretension, whenever it has professed *not to pre-suppose* self-consciousness; neither has that which it has always put forth as the last anchorage of all certitude, ever been any other than *pure* self-consciousness. The "cogito ergo sum" forms the foundation of all modern philosophical speculation.

§ 4. Here, accordingly, it would at first appear, from a new point of view, that the possibility of any distinction between theological and philosophical speculation is cut off. For since such a distinction is impossible, in respect of their *method*, yea since the speculative method is speculative only on this very ground, that it is *one*, no prospect could lie open for a distinction being drawn between them, except a distinction in those immediate primary data of consciousness, from which both should take their start. But this possibility seems now also to have disappeared, since it is only pure subjective self-consciousness upon which speculation can from the first plant itself. Nevertheless our point is not yet to be given up as hopeless. Perfectly true is it, that it is subjective self-consciousness alone, that is given to us with absolute and immediate certitude; but this is not necessarily *bare* self-consciousness *as such*, but also *religious* self-consciousness; or, in other words, consciousness of the Divine. The religious subject feels in his experience that his self-consciousness is not absolutely pure, or purely subjective, but it is constructed at the same time with an immediate objective determination, namely, with the religious. He is in no other way conscious *of himself* than in such wise that he is conscious at

the same time of his relation to God, and his self-consciousness is, therefore, equally certain when viewed as a consciousness of the Divine, as it is immediately certain, in the form of pure subjective self-consciousness. This may perhaps appear to be an arbitrary supposition: but within our province, that of theology, and within the sphere of the religious life, it is no arbitrary supposition. We allow it to no one to call the reality of piety itself in question, or to denominate it a bare self-deception. We freely confess our inability indeed to confute skepticism as directed against piety itself. A theology can only exist under the pre-supposition of piety, and the acknowledgment of its legitimacy. That no theological speculation whatever can exist for those who deny the phenomenon of piety, as a peculiar and self-evident determination of human life, is so manifest, that we do not for a moment *imagine* that our reasonings can appear tenable to them.

Moreover, we must ourselves have a very bad idea of what piety is, if we would pretend to *demonstrate* it to them. Unquestionably there are persons to whom piety is an absolutely certain, and that an *immediately* certain fact; and to these alone we now speak. The reality of piety is immediately certain to them, on the very same principle from which all unconditionally and immediate certainty flows—namely, from their own immediate experience. They live in actual fellowship with God, and experience immediately the peculiar distinction between this religious tendency of their inward life, and all other tendencies of it; and so it becomes as immediately certain, that piety really exists, as that their very sensations exist as parts of their direct consciousness. Piety has already essentially ceased to be piety, so soon as it needs for its certitude a proof either of its own reality or that of its object. The confession of the pious is this:—God is as immediately certain to me as myself, because I cannot feel or conceive of the consciousness and the thought of myself in any other way, than as immediately connected with the feeling and the thought of God; self-consciousness cannot *complete* itself within me without the Divine consciousness: or rather, God is to me *more* immediately certain than myself, for in the light of my Divine consciousness my self-consciousness first truly realizes itself: God is to me the absolutely and immediately

certain, and I become first truly certain of myself by means of my certainty of God. If, therefore, to the pious the consciousness of the Divine is the most immediately certain of all things, then he can find there a datum, which he is justified in making a *primary datum*, and a *starting-point* for speculative thinking, in the same manner as the man who abstracts his inward life from the phenomena of piety proceeds simply with his self-consciousness as such. Both start in their speculation from self-consciousness; but this self-consciousness is twofold, according as it is taken in that essential determination, which it receives by reason of the reflection of God within it, or abstracted altogether from such determination. Just as the universe must be construed *à priori* from our bare subjective self-consciousness when a general speculation is required, so also can it be construed out of our consciousness of the Divine. If, then, there are two *perfect*—equally perfect and equally valid points from which one and the same speculative procedure can start, there must also be a twofold kind of speculation. The one proceeds from the human consciousness *as such*, the other from consciousness as Divine consciousness; accordingly, the latter is what we term religious, or, to speak more accurately, theological speculation; while the former can be no other than that which we term philosophical. However nearly they may be related to each other, yet, *in form*, they must ever be perfectly distinct; for, though proceeding by one and the same law, yet they go two different roads, because they start from two different points. Both construe the universe *à priori:* philosophical speculation thinks and comprehends it by virtue of the idea of *self;* theological speculation by virtue of the idea of *God*,—on which account it is called Theosophy. Theological speculation can only begin with the idea of God; philosophical speculation, which apparently cannot begin with it, will be obliged to end by it, when every thing else is brought into order and harmony. The evidence, also, in both cases, is identical. If the philosopher will shake his head in the view of theological speculation, the theologian will not unfrequently do the same in the view of the philosophical. Only for him to whom the supposition of one or the other is *equally valid*, can the results, even with the utmost strictness in the speculative process, be equally convincing.

§ 5. For the pious, then, there exists the possibility of a religious, or, more properly speaking, a theological speculation. Let us, therefore, first of all, make its relation to piety perfectly clear. And in the outset, let it be understood—that piety has no need of speculation as the condition of its inward certitude. To itself it is immediately certain, and that, too, in an absolute manner, but only in the concrete, and exactly in the same measure in which the quality really exists. In order to believe confidently in itself, it needs no proof of its own reality, and seeks after none; yea, even if such proof were offered as the foundation of its faith, it would indignantly spurn it. It were humiliating if any one were to imagine it to give up its lofty independence, and to make its existence dependent upon any demonstration, or upon the skill of the logical understanding: and, consequently, it must appear a foolish undertaking, to deduce its certainty from any thing else, which, to the pious man, could be more certain than the truth of his piety,—whilst, in fact, this is precisely to him the most certain thing of all, yea, and the light in which he first clearly perceives every thing else. Nevertheless piety needs speculation in order truly to satisfy itself; that is, in order truly to comprehend itself, in order to be entirely piety in the view of the understanding and of reflective thought. Piety (and that of a Christian character) is essentially an affair of the whole man: he only is truly pious who is so, or wishes to be so, with his whole being; not only with all his feelings and impulses, but with all the faculties of the understanding and powers of the will. On the side of the self-consciousness piety is, primitively speaking, an affair of *feeling*, as on the side of activity an affair of *impulse;* but by virtue of an inward necessity it cannot remain so. Without destroying itself, as religious feeling, it marches onwards by virtue of its own inward vital energy, to religious thinking, first of all to mere reflection, but then afterwards to religious speculation. In this way it makes good to the understanding its original, immediate, and (on the side of feeling) absolute certitude; and, however superfluously, furnishes a proof for its own truth. For all proof can consist in nothing else, than in the pointing out of a perfect consistency between the single conception to be proved, and all others, and of its perfect unity with them in an organic whole. But

piety adduces this proof, not in order to demonstrate to itself its own certitude, but in order formally to expound the foundation of the same. Theological speculation thus springs out of an immediate religious life;* out of the immediate desire of piety itself clearly to understand all that it possesses,—to know what infinite riches lie hidden in its spontaneous fulness, while yet in its immediate and unreflective form. (Compare 1 Corinthians ii. 12.) Thinking, and that speculative thinking, is, therefore, to it an absolute necessity, in exactly the same proportion in which the function of thought generally is developed in the religious individual. Religious speculation has, therefore, its motive and occasion, not by any means in religious *skepticism*, but, on the contrary, in an unconditioned religious vitality. In the plenitude of its absolute certainty, it is bold enough to consider even speculation as a province springing out of itself, and to address itself to its conquest. In the inspiration of this most joyous self-confidence, it trusts itself fearlessly upon the ocean of thought, well assured that it will not be overwhelmed in it. That it must be ultimately successful in speculating upon itself, it is well assured from the immediate unconditioned certainty of its own absolute reality; but even in the feeling of its own exuberance, it says freely to itself that it can only succeed by a slow process, and by the concentration of all its powers.

There is another point of view, however, from which the necessity of religious speculation presses itself immediately upon the pious. Piety requires essentially and unconditionally the aid of an unlimited fellowship; a fellowship, however, of the pious is, in the long-run and on the side of self-consciousness (about which we now more immediately treat), by no means possible, upon the sole basis of *feeling*. There requires to be a clear understanding between those who are associated with each other respecting the peculiar nature of the piety common to them all; and this can only be gained on condition of its being brought to a reflective expression—a result which can only be satisfactorily obtained through the means of speculation.

§ 6. According to the relation now described between piety and

* The consciousness of this formed the peculiar excellence of the γνωσις of Clemens of Alexandria.

theological speculation, the former clearly stands with an unquestionable authority over the latter. Theological speculation should, and will, be essentially nothing else than the expression, on the part of the pious, of the immediate and absolute certain *content*, of his religious consciousness in reflective form. Of this content, which it cannot create, but only elaborate into thought, it can alter nothing; and the pious man must have ceased to be immediately certain of the truth of his piety,—that is, to be pious at all, if he could allow such an office to it. Theological speculation should, and will, only make the form of the religious consciousness transparent for the expression of the matter. Its proof, therefore, lies necessarily here: that the immediate religious consciousness from which it starts should recognize itself complete in its operations, but in such a manner that it now finds itself to have come to a clear understanding respecting itself. The peculiar religious conceptions with which piety found itself before surrounded, in the fellowship to which it belongs, may indeed have been broken and destroyed in the hands of theological speculation, but the *religious feeling*, out of which those conceptions themselves first sprang, must have remained unmoved, under the speculative process. Nay, much rather by its means must it have gained unlimited room to breathe freshly and freely, and to pour itself forth in its whole developed fulness with an unembarrassed certitude. If the opposite case occur, this is proof enough to the speculative theologian, that his speculative labor must have miscarried, and he hesitates not for one moment to pull it down to the ground, however much trouble it may have cost him. He cannot err, through any speculation, as to the truth of his *piety;* but neither can he err, through the latter, as to his speculation. In case of error, some fault must have slipped into his *speculative process;* but never can the problem itself appear unresolvable by speculation altogether. For in his daily immediate experience of the inward consistency and unity of his own peculiar religious consciousness, he must feel it to be absolutely capable of being translated into the language of pure idea; and he must unconditionally believe the possibility, that its contents may then be given back unaltered in reflective form. Accordingly he searches for the error in his speculative process; and even if he cannot discover it,

yet he is perfectly convinced of its existence. But still, notwithstanding the sovereign authority of religion over theological speculation, yet it must be nothing the less insisted upon, that this speculative process holds itself absolutely independent of religion. So long as it is in process of completion, and not yet fully terminated, no glance whatever must be cast upon religious *feeling*, in order to anticipate the proof, which we shall at length demand upon the whole, in reference to individual points. By such a procedure the strictness of the speculative process is altogether destroyed, and can only give forth imperfect results on both sides.

§ 7. If, therefore, the unconditional independence of theological speculation upon philosophy must be maintained and demanded, yet the necessity of an express and close *relation* between them should by no means be denied. On the contrary, the labor of theological speculation can only succeed in proportion as it engages in the same with speculative skill (which, however, can only be learned by means of the philosophy that has hitherto *alone* labored in its development), so also will no one venture to deny any further result as arising from theological speculation, who has not thoroughly gone through all schools of philosophy with the utmost completeness and yet continues fixed in them. And surely it should not be difficult for the pious, and especially for Christians, to retain undimmed their religious sobriety in this philosophical auditorium; to retain also in connection with it the original freshness of their pious feelings, the glow and the sacredness of their first religious love, the clearness and simplicity of their devotion and their faith.

§ 8. Speculative theology must be something essentially different for every peculiar form of piety, notwithstanding the strictness of the speculative method which is equally inexorable in every case. For in each form of it the starting-point of theological speculation, namely, the peculiar determination of the religious consciousness, is essentially different. There must be, therefore, a speculative theology peculiarly Christian. But for the same reason, also, within the limits of Christianity, there must be an essentially distinct speculative theology for every peculiar Christian fellowship, since we must suppose that their doctrinal variations rest upon essentially peculiar modifications of the universal Christian consciousness.

Accordingly there must be a peculiarly *evangelical* speculative theology. Moreover, the more fixedly the religious consciousness of the individual is bound down to the reflective expression of the same, as determined by his Church—that is, *to dogmas*, and the more honestly he binds himself subjectively *to* these dogmas, the less room is there for a speculative theology, and the less necessity for it. Therefore it is that a Christian *speculative* theology in distinction from a *dogmatic*, and really independent of it, has only made its appearance, strictly speaking, in the Protestant Church; and finds *there only* a firm ground upon which it can really flourish. But even in the Evangelical Church it is but recently that it has been able to exist. So long as the Church dogmas in each particular fellowship really satisfy its religious thinking, and the members really find in them a complete, consistent, and reflective expression of their pious feeling in that peculiar form in which it exists in the Church; so long they possess, in the scientific statement of their Church dogmas, or system of dogmas (that is, in a word, in their dogmatic), the speculative theology which would be otherwise separately required. It is when the dogmas and the dogmatic of the Church can no longer satisfy scientifically the more thinking of its members (which is always the case when a particular Church has already entered upon a process of metamorphosis or dissolution), that the necessity of a speculative theology by the side of the dogmatic arises. But since a speculative theology becomes visible in no other way *than* by the side of a dogmatic, therefore, its appearance is ever a sign that the particular church to which it belongs is already in process of change or dissolution. And, generally speaking, the more the whole Church-peculiarity falls back upon Christian piety itself, and the Church gradually dissolves, so much the more pregnancy must its *speculative* theology contain, and so much the more must it place itself in the foreground, above every other theological discipline.

§ 9. We see, then, that speculative theology *cannot* be bound fast to the dogmas of the Church. It feels itself to be connate with them; yea, it knows that it is one determinate branch of its own office to develope them still further. Since its very necessity arises from the fact that the understanding no longer finds in these dogmas

a satisfactory expression for the peculiar religious life of the Church, its conclusions, if they have any worth, *must* stand relatively apart from them. Speculative theology must, according to its very idea, be *heterodox;* but heterodox, indeed, in the *right* sense—in that, namely, which Schleiermacher has so excellently distinguished from a *false* heterodoxy. The departure of the conclusions of speculative theology from the Church dogmas can only consist in this;—that the one find their completion in the other, and can only in this way be fully explained. The peculiar and fundamental religious feeling must find in speculative theology the real correspondent expression which, at first, it thought to possess, but sought for in vain in its dogmas—an expression in which it finds its own pure and entire reflective representation, and through which it now first truly understands itself. But in the fact of its now learning to understand itself fully, it becomes conscious that hitherto it has never understood itself correctly—that that peculiarly new historical impulse in the development of the kingdom of the Saviour, by which it was originally kindled, had not been able *immediately* to unfold its full power, and, consequently, was not able to give to the new fellowship which it created that precise tendency which was designed by it. Accordingly, the determinate Church, in coming really to itself by means of speculative theology, is at the same time raised above itself. Its peculiar religious life, by beholding itself in the mirror of pure idea, transforms itself into a new form, and constructs for itself a new world in place of that which has now become foreign to it. Since no peculiar Christian Church can regard itself as a finality, and no existing one is the *completed* form of Christian fellowship, the fact that its development is at the same time a gradual dissolution, is in perfect consistency with the idea of its normal state.

§ 10. Quite different, on the contrary, is the relation of speculative theology to the *Holy Scriptures* in the Evangelical Church. For it, and, indeed, for all theological systems generally, the Holy Scriptures are an indispensable *canon*, as being the authentic expression of the Christian consciousness in its original fulness and purity. With them its results can never be in contradiction; in them it must be able expressly to point out the determinate germ of all its ideas and relations. Accordingly, the necessary difference between that

spontaneous expression of the Christian consciousness that prevails in the Bible, and that *reflective* expression of it which alone holds good in speculative theology cannot naturally be regarded as being in any way a contradiction. Wherever a real contradiction of speculative theology with Holy Scripture is manifest, the former must immediately acknowledge the error to be on its own side, and must confess its results to be abortive. It *must* have speculated erroneously; otherwise, such a dissent were impossible. Yea, a positive defence of the Scriptures is to be looked for in this respect from theological speculation. The system of ideas which it affords must prove itself to be a key peculiarly adapted for opening the full sense of the Holy Scriptures. In this way there must be gained, if not an absolutely adequate comprehension of them, yet adequate to a degree which was not attainable by any former theological apparatus—a comprehension of that which, in the eyes of a mere traditional exegesis, remained ever irrational. But, if speculative theology must submit itself unconditionally to the judgment of Holy Scripture, so much the more inexorably must we require of it, that in the speculative process it hold itself free from the influence of its authority, and never allow its procedure in individual cases to be guided by any side glance upon the Bible, or by any desire of aiming at a result correspondent with the Biblical doctrine. In its procedure it must consider absolutely nothing but the requisitions of thought, and know no other authority than that of logic and dialectics. When, however, it has ended its labor with perfect independence, then, conscious of its own weakness, it comes before the tribunal of the Scriptures, and awaits submissively their uncorrupted judgment.

§ 11. Speculative theology, according to the idea of it now given, is only an *individual production*; its starting-point is the individual religious consciousness of the speculator. But this mere individual character soon disappears, inasmuch as on the one side it regulates itself expressly by the Holy Scriptures and places itself in relation to the doctrines of the Church; while, on the other side, it *necessarily* supposes a religious consciousness of such a nature that the common religious consciousness of the Church clearly reflects itself in it. We say *necessarily*, for unless the theologian participated really in the universal, spiritual, and even philosophical conscious-

ness of his age, no need whatever could arise in him to speculate; and, unless the spirit which inspires him were not predominantly a religious one, he would not turn to theological but rather to the side of philosophical speculation. Consequently, every theological speculation, in proportion as it becomes successful, will have this result, —that its conclusions gradually pass over into the universal conviction of the fellowship to which it belongs. An individual character, however, still unavoidably attaches to it, inasmuch as it demands a relative tendency to the dissolution of the Church as the condition of its existence. This being the case, we cannot come forward with any new attempt at theological speculation without the painful consciousness of giving an appearance of immodesty and assumption, and we might almost wish in doing so to fall under the suspicion of light-mindedness, as though we were ignorant what we were doing and what claim we were setting up.

§ 12. A speculative theology, in the sense now developed, we hold to be a *real necessity* for the Church, and, in its present state, a very pressing one. Speculation, as we before remarked, is an inward and indelible necessity of man, and, therefore, of the Christian. The pious Christian well knows that the immediate and spontaneous form of his religious consciousness is partly veiled in obscurity; and the more valuable he holds it to be, of so much the more importance is it to lift the veil away. He knows also that mere reflective thinking cannot perfectly accomplish this end; that its completion can only be attained by means of *speculation*. Still more immediately does the necessity of speculative theology become apparent, when we consider the relation of the Church to the other spheres of human life. Philosophy speculates on, without asking previously the permission of the Church. It does not start from the Christian, or, indeed, from any form of the religious consciousness. Accordingly, it cannot fail to come into frequent conflict with the peculiar Christian consciousness. The question, therefore, arises, what should Christian piety do in relation to philosophy? Should it ignore the contradictions of philosophy against that which, to it, is the most certain and sacred of all things, and have nothing fundamentally to do with philosophy at all? That would be accounted as mere cowardice, and could not at all succeed, so long as we aim at a theology

which shall not stand isolated from the universal science and cultivation of the age. The Church unavoidably stands in the midst of this universal cultivation and science, and all the problems which they moot present themselves necessarily to all the members of the Church, who are scientifically instructed, and necessitate them to seek a solution from the stand-point of their religious consciousness. In a word, the Church must come to a clear explanation with the science of each age, and, still more, with the philosophy in which all other human disciplines are concentrated, if she would have a prosperous existence within her own sphere. But this can only be gained by a strictly scientific procedure, and by the application, too, of a proper theological procedure—that is, of speculation starting from its own point of view, as based upon the Christian consciousness. It is only by such a resolution that a mutual understanding, not to say a unanimity, can be established between Christian piety and philosophy; and a mutual acknowledgment of what they owe to each other. At no time has it been so important to feel the indispensableness of speculative theology as in our own. A full half of the evils which at present oppress the Christian life come simply from the fact that our Churches have not been mindful at the *righ hour* of arming themselves with a speculative theology. There was a time when philosophy and the doctrines of the Church reckoned with ideas of precisely the same magnitude (since both employed the same alphabet of ideas), and, on that account, understood each other mutually. But this time, for Germany at least, has for more than a century gone by. As, generally, the business of philosophy consists essentially in laboring onwards in the perfection of the ideas always current in science, and in defining each with greater completeness, so that they may be worked together into an entire system; as also, peculiarly since the rise of the so-called modern philosophy, a vast activity in this respect has prevailed, through which the whole alphabet of ideas has more than once experienced a great transformation. This has taken place naturally from a purely philosophical point of view, independent of the interests of Christian piety. It should now be the problem, therefore, of theology to undertake *on its side*, and with equal zeal, the same labor from its own peculiar point of view. Hitherto this has been inconvenient to it, and it has, alas!

almost entirely neglected the duty. The consequence is, that the apparatus of ideas which it received from an earlier age is antiquated in relation to science generally, and appears out of course; so that the language sanctioned by the Church, to philosophically educated minds, is ofttimes unmeaning; and when the attempt is really made to come to an understanding with them in their own language, the appropriate words and symbols are entirely wanting. It possesses, at present, no specific alphabet of ideas drawn from the elements of modern thought which is adapted to express with proper logical consistency the Christian consciousness of the age. There remains, therefore, only this alternative,—either to use barbarous language without any really consistent apparatus of ideas, or to adopt *that* system of ideas which philosophy has established from its own point of view for scientific communication. In the latter case, it cannot, on the one side, express purely, clearly and intelligently what it has to say, because the form in which it clothes the matter of its own consciousness has not grown to it naturally, as exactly adapted for its own body; and, on the other side, since it reckons with ideas which of themselves express something different from what it wants to designate by them, it must necessarily become confused. Inevitably, therefore, it has resigned the victory into the hands of *secular science*, so far as it really disagrees with it, inasmuch as it adopts its premises in order to argue against it. In the former case, however, it must necessarily sink, by how much *the longer* so much *the more*, in the estimation of all scientific communities. The philosophy of the present period possesses a network of definite and strictly systematic ideas; and, since the present theology is entirely wanting in any thing of the kind, the former catches for itself, without any difficulty, the better heads, wherever other and deeper interests do not preponderate over that of thinking itself.

§ 13. In the system of theological disciplines, *speculative* theology must take the first place (the head). After this follows *historical* theology (the trunk); and lastly, practical theology (the hands and feet). Speculative theology must stand before the other two parts, because it forms the pre-supposition for both. In the case of practical theology, this is peculiarly obvious, for its essential problem consists in this,—that it fixes the formula for such a treatment

the present condition of the Church, by virtue of which it can approach by a steady march to its full development. This problem, however, it cannot solve, so long as, on the one side, it does not rightly understand the peculiar position of the Church at the present moment, and, on the other side, does not possess a clear perception of its perfect state; neither of which is possible without the real idea of the Christian Church and its relation to Christianity—an idea which can only be found in a speculative manner. Without this idea, the whole historical phenomenon of Christianity generally cannot be truly understood, and, therefore, historical theology presupposes speculative theology. We should not, however, any the more deny that, in other points of view, speculative theology may have both the others as its pre-supposition, particularly the historical. For in every complete system, such as theology should be, the individual parts are mutually the absolute conditions of each other. Least of all is it our meaning that theological studies should *commence* with speculative theology.

§ 14. We have already hinted that our theology does not yet possess a complete speculative discipline. Attempts at it were begun, indeed, very early, and have been repeated at all times by the so-called Theosophists, at the head of whom stand the Gnostics; but these attempts have partly failed in a proper comprehension of their real aim, and partly have found no acknowledgment in the Church, having been thrust out more or less among the heresies. In the Church itself, indeed, the necessity of theological speculation could not be denied. It is grounded so deeply in the inmost essence of the Christian life, that men have been constrained at all times to give their minds to it. But they have done so without any clear consciousness of the specific distinction between theological and philosophical speculation; so that no really independent theological speculation could be produced, but only an intolerable misplacement of philosophy, with all kinds of religious and theological elements pressing into it. On the one side, men have not kept strictly within the theological stand-point: on the other side, they have carried no real and organically connected system of theological speculation to a completion. They have ever remained content with mere aphoristic attempts at the construction of individual doc-

trines, and the like. Most frequently they have applied such a speculative theologizing to a dogmatic treatment of Christian doctrine, consequently to an entirely false purpose. From hence has sprung a confusion alike destructive for dogmatics on the one side and theological speculation on the other. Nevertheless, amongst the dogmatic theologians, a very considerable amount of theological speculation has been produced, only in the loosest possible manner. So also in that philosophical discipline which has hitherto borne the name of the philosophy of religion. This has been, in fact, for the most part nothing else than theological speculation, particularly in its earlier forms: only the consciousness of this its theological character was entirely wanting, so that it held itself to be unobjectionable for philosophy. Such a self-deception, however, in relation to its scientific character, could not but be followed by the most injurious consequences.

THE END.

14 DAY USE

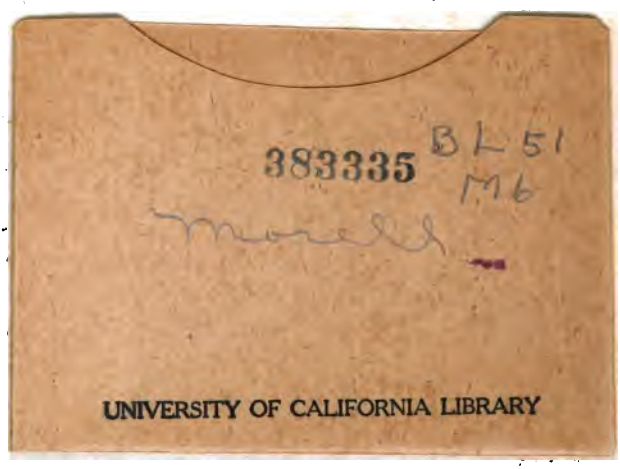
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

19Fe58WW	
REC'D LD	
FEB 5 1958	

LD 21A–50*m*-8,'57
(C8481s10)476B

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

YC154902